Well-Preserved

Updates
from
NEIGHBORHOOD GARDENS ASSOCIATION
A Land Trust dedicated to
Preserving Philadelphia's Community Gardens

Volume 1 • Number 1 • Summer 1993

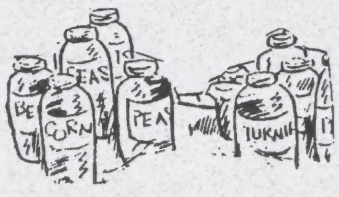
FROM THE DIRECTOR

In the past year, our young organization has experienced a happy combination of many successes along with some leadership changes as we pursued our mission: making community gardens permanent in Philadelphia's neighborhoods.

Our 1993 successes include five newly preserved gardens, continued support from foundations and generous donors, and our first published newsletter, "Well-Preserved." On the leadership front, Terry Mushovic assumed the mantle of President of the Board, and I was appointed Executive Director in January 1993.

Personally, it has been a pleasure working closely with NGA's dedicated Board of Directors. Our Board consists of gardeners, community leaders, and businesspersons, all providing hands-on expertise to our programs and policy making procedures.

With these elements — committed leadership, committed Board members, *and you, our interested supporters* — NGA has the building blocks that form a strong foundation to accomplish its mission. I extend my warmest appreciation to all of you who share and support NGA's goal of protecting the "green assets" of Philadelphia's neighborhoods.



Claire T. Power,
Executive Director

Welcome to the first issue of **"Well-Preserved,"** published by the Neighborhood Gardens Association (NGA). We look forward to communicating with you through our updates, and welcome comments or suggestions for future issues.

THE "WELL-PRESERVED" EIGHT

Seedy Acres -- Northern Liberties
Church Lane Garden -- Germantown
Warrington Community Garden -- Cedar Park
1500 Block Grays Ferry -- West Shore
Kauffman Green -- Queen Village
The Birdhouse Garden -- Point Breeze
1222 S. 17th Street -- Point Breeze
Seedy Acres Kids -- Northern Liberties

Eight gardens!! 188 happy gardeners!! All looking forward to a harvest this year and for many years to come. Working closely with the gardeners, and using a variety of real estate strategies, NGA successfully preserved five gardens this year, bringing our total number of permanent gardens to eight.

Currently, we have 27 acquisition requests in progress and look forward to adding them to our "Well-Preserved" list.

In our next issue, gardeners from Seedy Acres, 900-922 N. Leithgow St., tell the story of their involvement with NGA and how it has saved a portion of their garden from development.

FY93: FUNDING SUCCESS!!!

Thanks to our many supporters: Individuals, Corporations, Grantors and Foundations!!

Once again, friends of gardens have responded to our fundraising drive: both directly and via the **United Way Donor Option Program**. Many of you have a history of consistent support in the past three years. Many of you are new supporters. Some of you are active gardeners. Some of you are spectator horticulturists. **All of you believe in preserving gardens and we thank you.** Your gifts ranged from $5 to $5,000, a very generous show of confidence in NGA's garden preservation programs.

Gifts from individuals go directly to the operating budget and enable our staff to carry out NGA's projects.

Other major grants and gifts included an annual donation from **The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society**, the awarding of a three-year grant from **The William Penn Foundation**, receipt of our second-year commitment from **The Philadelphia Foundation,** Year 3 of a grant from **The Pew Charitable Trusts,** and Corporate contributions from **PNC Bank** and **The Philadelphia Inquirer**. Funding from these sources goes towards a combination of acquisition and operation funds.

Well-Preserved is a publication of the
Neighborhood Gardens Association/
A Philadelphia Land Trust
Claire T. Power, Executive Director
Elayne Lemanow, Editor
Special thanks to **Sally McCabe**, Education Specialist for the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society's Philadelphia Green Program, for her patience and perseverance in helping us get into print.

WHAT IS NGA?

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Most community gardeners do not own the land where they garden and are always at risk of being asked to leave the land. NGA can help gardeners reduce that risk by offering assistance with real estate and land ownership options. These options vary and range from NGA actually acquiring the land to NGA assisting gardeners with the real estate research, negotiations, and legal work necessary to acquire the gardens themselves.

Our programs strongly complement the ongoing gardening projects of The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society's Philadelphia Green Program and Penn State's Urban Gardening Program.

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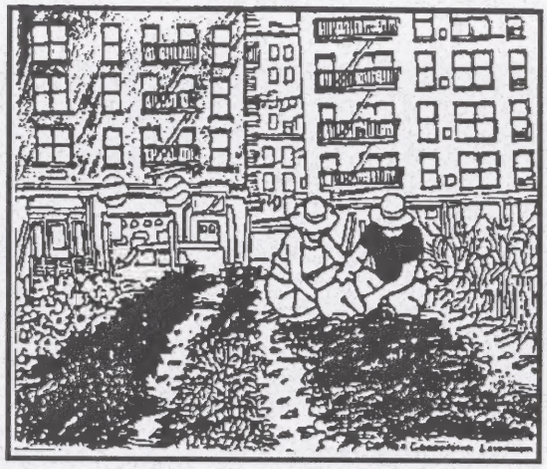


From the Director

Since it was founded, NGA has been a member of the Land Trust Alliance. This nationwide organization consists of land trusts and conservation organizations, each striving to protect this country's ever diminishing resource - open space.

This past fall, I attended the Alliance's annual rally. As always, the rally was a forum for sharing the successes and challenges in preserving wildlands, farms and natural habitats. In the past, while celebrating the victories of those in attendance, *I knew that NGA stood alone in its unique mission of preserving community-managed gardens in a city environment.*

The 1993 rally was different. Representatives of urban areas were eager to learn more about the application of our program. Organizations who had heard of our programs at past rallies, and had already implemented NGA's concept, shared their stories-in-progress. I am proud to say that the NGA garden preservation program is being successfully copied in cities such as Seattle, Minneapolis, San Diego, and Chicago.

I welcome my counterparts and wish them success as they experience the challenges and satisfaction that comes from preserving community gardens as permanent open space.

Claire T. Power
Executive Director

Now We Have Ten!

Welcome to our two new gardens! **Southwark/Queen Village, 311-333 Christian St.** and **Squirrel Hill (Cedar Park), 4713-15 Chester Ave**. celebrated the signing of NGA garden agreements with a barbecue and a coffee & cake gathering, respectively. NGA's circle now includes ten well-preserved gardens.

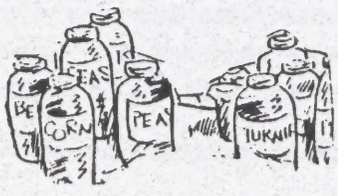
Other ceremonies this year included a **Warrington Community Garden** gathering; gardeners renewed their garden agreement and looked on as a new NGA sign was posted at the garden entrance.

Environmental Grant Received

The Neighborhood Gardens Association/A Philadelphia Land Trust recently received a $23,000 one-year grant from the **Merck Family Fund** to continue to "ensure the long-term preservation of community gardens...in Philadelphia." Nationally, ten other groups were honored with grants ranging from $12,500 to $50,000 for serving human needs through community greening.

The Merck Family Fund is dedicated to protecting the natural environment while addressing the root causes of problems faced by socially and economically disadvantaged people.

Inside: ***The Seedy Acres Garden Story***



A Garden Preserve --

The Seedy Acres Story

Through NGA's ownership, the process of creating a balance between open greenspace and housing has begun.

By Sally McCabe

When I first started visiting Northern Liberties in 1980, neighbors kept chickens in their backyards, and children raised ponies in the neighborhood's vacant houses. In fact, pony-chariot races across the vacant stretches of land were routine events. Struck by this unique blend of culture, country, and city, I moved there in 1983.

Birth of a garden

In 1984, eight people (including myself) started the Seedy Acres community vegetable garden. We wanted fresh, nutritious food for our families and a place to work out in the air. With our eye on the large vacant tract of land in the 900 block of Leithgow Street, we picked six lots for planting. Three of the lots were privately-owned and three were owned by the City. Some of the private landowners, also Northern Liberties residents, became our strongest cheerleaders: by allowing us to garden their vacant lots, they had a way to keep their land "clean & weed-free" as required by City regulations.

Vacant land becomes valuable

As we were steadily transforming unused land for gardening, another trend was striking Northern Liberties with a vengeance: gentrification. Our neighborhood, formerly considered in decline, was suddenly being noticed for its attributes: proximity to center city, low-rents, and an abundance of low-cost housing and inexpensive vacant lots. Vacant land (suddenly a valuable commodity) and vacant houses began to sell. Some of the buyers wanted to live in the area while others became speculators, waiting to sell the land when the value skyrocketed.

Some of the vacant land being bought and sold was on the same block as Seedy Acres. Pushed by the impending development plans of our new landowners, we pulled up stakes from some of our original lots and rearranged our garden boundaries twice in three years. The new garden now included the City lots plus four more lots, which were owned by speculators.

More people join garden

Throughout these events, our garden group continued to grow. We now had 12 adults and 6 kids. The role of our garden also grew; it became an outdoor meeting space, a picnic area, and a visual treat to passersby.

More people wanted to join our garden. In early 1986, Seedy Acres absorbed another twenty adults and built a separate section for the kids, expanding onto a total of 18 lots.

With eight different landowners, we routinely requested the landowners' permission to continue gardening each year before planting. Whenever we were able to locate the owners, permission was readily granted.

Garden threatened

In late 1986, a chance comment at a bus stop alerted us that we were about to lose a significant part of our garden. A local property owner with plans for development had applied for ownership of our city-owned lots. Word spread quickly and 24 hours later more than 30

...a chance comment at a bus stop alerted us that we were about to lose a significant part of our garden.

gardeners and supporters assembled at a neighborhood zoning meeting to protest the acquisition. They were able to temporarily stay the execution. The City then agreed to delay granting ownership to any developers. Our neighborhood association, realizing that greened open space was important to the community, wrote into its bylaws that all

city-owned open space in the neighborhood should remain open.

This was good news. However, neighborhood association bylaws are not binding as far as City agencies are concerned. The only way to be sure that our open space would forever remain a garden was through ownership. Since we were a garden group and not a corporation, we could not legally own the land ourselves.

It was through the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society's (PHS) Philadelphia Green Program that the gardeners learned of a land trust being formed specifically to preserve community gardens: Neighborhood Gardens Association (NGA). The fledgling organization was then so new that it only had a volunteer board and did not have a director or a permanent address.

NGA approached

Quickly we brought our situation to their attention. As NGA evolved into an operating organization, it guided Seedy Acres through the process of approaching the City, the City Council, and our neighborhood association for support in making our garden a permanent entity.

Two years and many meetings, petitions and hearings later, NGA took ownership of its first properties: the three city-owned lots at Seedy Acres garden. Last year, a former neighbor donated an additional two lots to NGA. Located right through the middle of our 18-plot garden, we turned these lots into a special section for the children who had been planting with us. We named it Seedy Acres Kids.

Currently, one-quarter of our garden is permanently preserved. NGA owns the land, paying the taxes and insurance. Through an agreement which renews every five years, Seedy Acres gardeners are permitted to plant and harvest the land for as long as they wish.

We now have almost 50 individual gardeners providing fresh food and vegetables to their families and friends. We are also yearly winners in the City Gardens Contest and PHS's Harvest Show.

Gardeners' roles expanded

Garden members have expanded their roles into community service greening-related activities. We are active participants in the Philadelphia More Beautiful Committee's neighborhood clean-ups, we sponsor European college kids who come to America for community service projects via the Workers for Peace program, and we maintain a tree farm to grow some of the community's future street trees.

Our local real estate market has also been positively affected. One landlord recently enticed a new tenant by offering a plot in the community garden. We are looking forward to working with our new neighbor.

Knowing that our land is forever preserved as a garden, we can now put our full attention on our day-to-day gardening activities and our community service projects.

Through NGA's ownership, and through the determination of the gardeners, the process of creating a balance between open greenspace and housing in this mostly residential neighborhood has begun. Knowing that our land is forever preserved as a garden, we can now put our full attention on our day-to-day gardening activities and our community service projects.

Who Owns Your Garden?

If you don't own the land, it might be sold. Community gardeners interested in finding out more about preserving their garden are invited to call Claire Power at NGA, 625-8264.

NGA Gardeners Are Winners!!

Participating in two **Pennsylvania Horticultural Society** events, the following NGA sites won recognition and prizes for the skillful techniques of their gardeners:

City Gardens Contest (held in cooperation with the **Penn State Urban Gardening Program**):

Childrens' Gardens

Seedy Acres Kids	3rd place

Small Community Vegetable Gardens

Seedy Acres	3rd place

Large Community Vegetable Gardens

Southwark/Queen Village	1st place
1500 Grays Ferry	2nd place

Mid-Size Community Combination Gardens

Squirrel Hill Community Garden	1st place

Harvest Show Sweepstakes

Southwark/Queen Village	1st place
1500 Grays Ferry	2nd place
Seedy Acres	3rd place
Church Lane	hon. mention

Neighborhood Gardens Association has recently published its Annual Report. If you have not received a copy and would like one, please call us at 625-8264.

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Welcome Aboard

With great pleasure, we announce NGA's Board of Directors for fiscal year 1995. Our current Board and officers are:

President - **Hayward Ford**, Aspen Farms community gardener
Vice President - **Robert Ross, Esq.**, Cohen, Shapiro, Polisher, Shiekman & Cohen
Secretary - **J. Blaine Bonham, Jr.**, Director, Philadelphia Green Program
Treasurer - **Mary Labaree**, Federal Reserve Bank

Our officers will be working with Board members: **Suzanne Faurot Barton**, Fundraising Consultant and gardener; **James L. Brown, IV**, President, Parkside Historic Preservation Corp.; **Richard Camitta**, President, Camitta Bros., Inc.; **Beverly Coleman**, Organization & Management Group; **Donald Felley**, Retired CEO, Rohm and Haas Company; **Jo Ann Fishburn**, Philadelphia School District and community gardener; **Libby Goldstein,** President, Food & Agriculture Task Force and community gardener; **Barbara Kaplan**, Executive Director, City Planning Commission; **Terry Mushovic**, Director, Penn State's Urban Gardening Program; **Mamie Nichols**, President, Point Breeze Federation, Inc.; **Delbert Payne**, Rohm and Haas Company; **Gerald W. Stump, Jr.**, Habitech, Inc.; and **Kenneth L. Woodson**, Philadelphia Zoo.

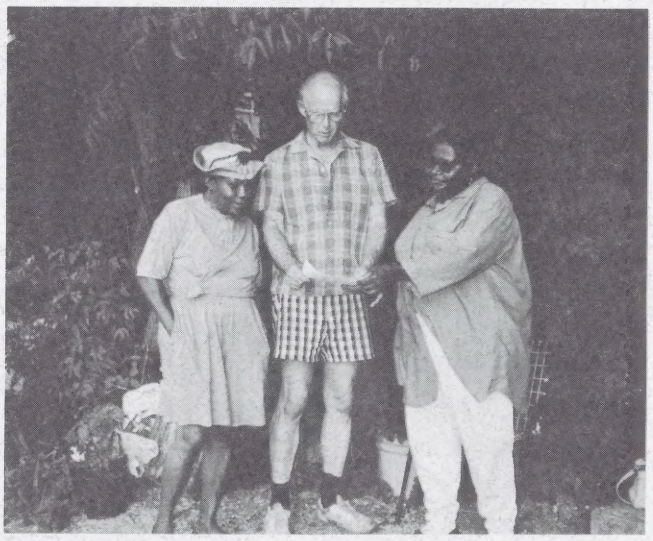
Delbert Payne, Jo Ann Fishburn, and Beverly

(Continued on page 4)

Sweet Sixteen Celebration

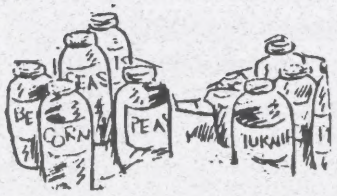
Welcome to our six new gardens -- Now we are 16!! Joining our list of well-preserved community gardens are:

846 N. Stillman St.	**Fairmount**
1544-46 South St.	**S.W. Center City**
1315 S. 22nd St.	**Pt. Breeze**
2111 Titan St.	**Pt. Breeze**
1426-30 S. Taylor St.	**Pt. Breeze**
1348-50 S. Bouvier St.	**Pt. Breeze**



Church Lane Community Gardeners *(left to right) Mattie Michel, Chris Nicholson (garden coordinator), and Edith Werts look over the garden's maintenance schedule.*

Inside: ***The Church Lane Garden Story***



A Garden Preserve - -

The Church Lane Garden Story

To passing pedestrians and motorists in the early 1970's, the 200 block of East Church Lane was a vacant stretch of rubbish and weed-strewn land. But to Germantown resident Chris Nicholson, it was a garden waiting to happen.

by Elayne Lemanow

The block wasn't always vacant. Several houses and a store once bustled with neighborhood life. However, in the 1960's, city planners presented blueprints for a six-lane highway: the Belfield Bypass. To make way for the Germantown section of the Bypass, the Redevelopment Authority (RDA) acquired and demolished the block. Concerned Germantown residents organized a strong, steady vocal opposition to the Bypass. Their voices were heard and the Belfield project finally came to a halt.

A Garden Solution

Neighborhood residents took on the new challenge of dealing with the now-vacant land because people were already beginning to dump trash there. **Chris Nicholson's** proposal of its use as a community garden to fellow members of the Wister Neighborhood Council (WNC) was enthusiastically received. With **Edith Werts** as his first supporter, Chris distributed flyers and posted a sign advertising "Community Garden - Plots Available" at the garden site. The neighbors came forward.

When Chris contacted The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society's Philadelphia Green program for hands-on gardening assistance, he learned of another group interested in the land -- The Germantown Organic Gardening Club. Both groups agreed to share the garden.

Building of a Garden

In 1978, the garden-building began. **Ted Smith**, a neighbor and professional landscaper lent his expertise. Philadelphia Green provided the fence, tools, mushroom soil and gardening tips. While the gardeners were clearing, tilling and sowing, Chris signed an RDA agreement granting permission on an annual basis that the land be used as a garden. This was a wonderful but temporary arrangement. Since the RDA is mandated to dispose of land it acquires, in time, the Church Lane garden would be put on the auction block.

...the gardeners and NGA were jolted by a notice listing the Church Lane properties for sale...

Garden Loss Possible

In the garden's sixth year, the RDA advertised the land for sale as Parcel 48, with a fair market value of $13,250.The gardeners expressed interest in keeping their garden. The WNC promised to support them in their efforts to find alternative ownership and financing for Parcel 48.

The RDA took the land off the market based on the garden's strong community backing and its positive urban renewal benefits. However, the RDA stressed that this was only a temporary measure and encouraged the gardeners to buy the land.

Although the gardeners could own the land themselves, to do so meant taking on taxes, insurance and recordkeeping in addition to their daily gardening and property maintenance. They wondered if they could find an established group willing to purchase the land and assume ownership responsibilities while they tended the land. At the same time, the gardeners began raising funds, netting $1,000 towards the purchase price.

Land Trust Saves Garden

In 1987, they learned of The Neighborhood Gardens Association (NGA), a newly formed land trust dedicated to preserving gardens. NGA readily agreed to help preserve the Church Lane garden. However, the Church Lane purchase could deplete most of NGA's limited funding. NGA asked the gardeners if they could help with the acquisition costs. With a resounding "Yes!" for an answer, NGA began the preservation process.

In 1990, the gardeners and NGA were jolted by a notice listing the Church Lane properties for sale at

their revised fair market value of $11,000.

With no time to spare, NGA quickly prepared itself to enter the RDA bidding process and emerged as the successful bidder. Historically, the RDA sold land for residential or commercial development, receiving full payment at purchase. NGA's successful negotiations resulted in an unprecedented arrangement. The RDA agreed that not only could the land remain a garden, but they would also hold a 10-year mortgage for the full purchase price.

As the garden's owner, NGA now handles everything involved with the land-holding costs: mortgage, taxes and insurance. As part of their agreement, the gardeners reimburse NGA annually for 50% of the mortgage payments and make a donation towards property tax and insurance costs. These monies, reinvested into a revolving acquisition fund, are earmarked for purchasing other community gardens. Through this arrangement, the Church Lane gardeners indirectly help others save their gardens.

The Garden Today

The garden is in its 17th year. Located on a heavily pedestrian-and-car-travelled street, it is a breath of nature nestled between houses, railroad tracks, commercial/industrial establishments, and nearby shopping districts. Chris Nicholson, is the garden's coordinator, aided by generous amounts of help from two "chief gardeners," Edith Werts and **Mattie Michel**. The gardeners have evolved into a well-organized team, following a formal set of rules regarding gardening, maintenance, and annual dues.

With the garden now preserved ... Church Lane gardeners are thinking of starting a children's plot. They want to continue cultivating food, flowers, and positive friendships in their neighborhood.

The garden is a social mecca. A sitting area provides a spot for chit-chat, idea-swapping, cookouts, and according to one gardener, "an opportunity to get one out in the neighborhood more...where one is likely to hear more about what's going on."

"More of what's going on" includes learning about and getting involved with their neighbors. Hamill Mill, a newly constructed home for seniors and the handicapped, is a block away. Edith gives vegetables to some of the residents; Chris has invited them to join the garden. "If one starts, then we figure more may follow," states Chris.

Gardeners participate in the Wister Neighborhood Council and the Philadelphia More Beautiful Committee's neighborhood clean-ups. They reap awards at The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society's Harvest Show - an annual event that brings gardeners together city-wide, fostering friendships beyond the confines of the neighborhood.

From a brick path that leads to the sitting area, one looks out at a vista of vegetables, raspberries, cherry trees and borders of colorful flowers. The garden bounty generates many tasty recipes. Edith takes pride in her eggplant casserole. And "my wife Helen is known for her cherry desserts" boasts Chris. The group also hosts an annual Garden Club Dinner with each gardener providing a special dish from the harvest.

Currently, 25 families work in the garden, with almost 100 people benefitting from gardening the land. All but one of the organic gardeners have since moved on, but Chris and many of the original Germantown neighbors remain involved. The gardeners are a diverse population, representing a microcosm of the neighborhood. Although most of them are middle-aged and older, the youngest member, 33 years old, is often accompanied by her 1 1/2 year old son. Other youngsters and grandchildren of the gardeners have planted the land.

With their garden preserved and with an eye on the the next generation, the Church Lane gardeners are thinking of starting a children's plot. They want to continue cultivating food, flowers, and positive friendships in their neighborhood.

Who Owns Your Garden?

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The Garden Preservers

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A gracious thank you for your support in preserving community life through gardening.

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Welcome Aboard (cont'd from page 1)

Coleman are newly-appointed members. Leaving the Board are **Gerri Spilka** (a founding member), **Sam Henley**, and **Ahada Stanford**.

Board members are nominated for three year terms with staggered rotations and represent three groups in approximately equal size: community gardeners, persons with technical expertise that will assist NGA, and others from the community-at-large. The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society's Philadelphia Green and Penn State's Urban Gardening Programs each have ex-officio seats.

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From the Editor

Yes, NGA does neighborhoods! Concentrating on the Point Breeze area, NGA created an Open Space Strategy and has already preserved community gardens at the request of its gardeners. For our feature article, ''Point Breeze - The Neighborhood,'' I interviewed Point Breeze gardeners as well as people working with them. As I spoke to people, one thing became very clear: the Point Breeze gardeners are a proud, creative, problem-solving group.

Instead of sitting back and letting their area decline, they took action. They harnessed their ''neighborhood improvement energy'' by grabbing the handiest tool they had: gardening. As a result, the mindset and landscape of Point Breeze have seen some positive changes.

I was impressed and I am sure you will be too. Please, take a minute and walk through Point Breeze's gardening history with us.

Elayne Lemanow, *Editor*

NGA's Expertise Tapped

The Neighborhood Gardens Association's expertise in open space planning was tapped at workshops co-sponsored by the city's **Office of Housing and Community Development** (OHCD) and **The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society's Philadelphia Green Program** this past December. Invited as a speaker and participant, NGA Executive Director Claire Power also served as a consultant on the workshops' format.

Workshops focussed on the physical, social and economic benefits of implementing open space plans as part of an overall neighborhood revitalization strategy. Participants had opportunities to do hands-on mapping and creative planning for open space in their specific communities. The workshops were attended by eleven city-wide Community Development Corporations.

A Gracious Thanks!

NGA staff and Board of Directors would like to once again thank the various Individuals, Corporations and Foundations for their generous support in preserving community life through gardening this past year. The gifts we receive from ''garden preservers'' are used for acquisition and operating support and enable our staff to successfully carry out NGA's preservation projects.

We thank you for your confidence and caring.

Inside: **Point Breeze - The Neighborhood**

A Garden Preserve - -

Point Breeze - The Neighborhood

by Elayne Lemanow

In the late 1970s, **Haroldline Trower** looked out her back window and didn't like what she saw: yet another vacant lot soon to be overflowing with trash in her South Philadelphia neighborhood. It hurt her eyes and heart but not her spirit.

Brimming with that ''determined self-help'' attitude common in her Point Breeze community, she set out to make that abandoned land productive. She'd turn that trashed lot into a garden!

She turned to **Mamie Nichols**, then Board President of the Point Breeze Federation Inc., a neighborhood non-profit community self-help organization. She also wrote letters to the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society. Soon she began dreaming of ''turning all of Point Breeze's vacant, trash-strewn lots into gardens!''

A Citizen's Persistence is Rewarded

Haroldline's persistence led to actions. Turning vacant lots into gardens appealed to the residents because they knew that it worked. Some Point Breeze residents had already used their long-standing Southern gardening know-how to turn isolated vacant lots into vital garden patches like **Alta Felton's** garden on South Taylor St. which had been thriving since the '60s.

Agreeing with Haroldline's vision, Mamie Nichols convinced **Blaine Bonham**, Director of the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society's Philadelphia Green Program, that concentrated greening efforts would create a powerful community improvement tool. Under the direction of the Point Breeze Federation, residents joined with the newly-formed Point Breeze Beautification Committee (chaired by Haroldline) and Philadelphia Green staff. Together, they would develop the neighborhood as a ''Greene Countrie Towne.''

Point Breeze residents, practical about their open space, historically have welcomed development that contributes to a balance of housing, business, and green space.

A Greene Countrie Towne

Greene Countrie Townes are joint ventures between Philadelphia Green and the neighborhood's residents to create a high concentration of community-developed and community-managed green space. They are modelled after William Penn's 1681 ''Greene Countrie Towne'' vision when he stated ''that in clearing the ground, care be taken to leave one acre of trees for every five acres cleared...'' Haroldline Trower and William Penn's similar visions were to become a reality.

In 1983 Point Breeze witnessed its dedication as a Greene Countrie Towne. Forty-eight trashed and unsightly vacant lots had been transformed into lush and bountiful gardens by Point Breeze gardeners.

The Neighborhood Flourishes

As a social avenue, the gardens bring people together. They beckon older people out of the house and attract children to weeding and planting activities. Homegrown food provides nutritional diets and significant food costs savings. Canning and freezing continues to supply food off-season.

Gardeners share their bounty with family, friends, and the homeless. Common bonds formed through gardening spring into a ready-made network for impromptu problem-solving. Informal community watches protect the gardens from vandals. Haroldline's daughter **Gloria**, who has coordinated youth gardening activities, has watched the children respect and protect the gardens. ''It becomes a part of them,'' she said.

NGA Winning Gardens!!

Participating in two **Pennsylvania Horticultural Society** events, NGA sites once again won recognition and prizes for their gardeners' skillful techniques. The NGA winners are:

City Gardens Contest (held in cooperation with the **Penn State Urban Gardening Program**):

Community Children's Garden
Seedy Acres Kids — 2nd place

Mid-Size Community Combination Gardens
4715 Chester Ave. — 3rd place

Large Community Combination Gardens
4700 Warrington Ave. — 2nd place

Small Community Flower Gardens
Stillman & Parrish Sts. — 1st place

Small Community Vegetable Gardens
Seedy Acres — 3rd place

Large Community Vegetable Gardens
3rd & Christian Sts. — 1st tie

Harvest Show Sweepstakes

Large Gardens
Seedy Acres — 1st place
Church Lane — Hon. Men.

Extra Large Gardens
3rd & Christian Sts. — 1st place

NGA Terms of Acquisition

NGA uses the following terms frequently:

Abandoned lot: trash-strewn, weed-filled land without any evidence of anyone assuming responsible care of the land and/or its surrounding sidewalk area.

Threatened: at risk of being told by the landowner to stop gardening and vacate the land.

Preservation: ownership or leasing arrangements through NGA which remove the threat of being asked to vacate the land.

Acquisition: when NGA purchases the land and becomes the owner. NGA is responsible for real estate taxes and insurance.

Garden Agreement: NGA's permission to gardeners to continue using the land for a stated purpose: gardening. This step occurs after real estate transactions between the landowners and NGA have been finalized.

Fifth Annual "First Vine-Ripened Tomato" Contest

Attention Philadelphia Community Gardeners!
It's time for NGA's "Fifth Annual First Vine-Ripened Tomato" contest.

First and second ripened tomatoes will receive a prize:
a gift certificate from Primex.

The contest is a chance for Philadelphia community gardeners to have some rewarding fun with their tomato plantings. An NGA staffperson must see the ripe tomato on the vine. Contestants should call NGA at 625-8264 when the vine-ripened tomatoes appear. We look forward to hearing from you.

Gloria also has witnessed the kind of group commitment that insures the gardens' continued success. If there are signs of a garden in decline, the gardeners stabilize it and recruit additional participants. When necessary, people put their own money into the gardens to "nourish that soil, feed it...and break their backs truckloading the soil in."

The Point Breeze Federation includes the promoting and supporting of its neighborhood gardens as part of its priorities. Corporations, funders, and city agencies, impressed by Point Breeze's dedicated and productive use of abandoned land, have helped to fund garden construction as well as salaries for the youth working in gardens.

Gardens Balance Overall Neighborhood Development

Although Point Breeze is steadily becoming an eye-pleasing, desirable community through its gardening, Mamie Nichols is quick to point out: "It is ludicrous to think that all of our open space should be gardens." Point Breeze residents are practical about their open space. Historically, they have welcomed development that contributes to an overall balance of housing, business, and green space.

When a huge vegetable garden was displaced by much needed new housing, the people welcomed the change. When a church group purchased garden land, the congregation was well-received and gardeners were absorbed into one of the many existing Point Breeze community gardens.

However, when officials of a soon-to-be-built church wanted to replace the actively-used Concert Garden across the street for parking, the community spoke up. Be practical, they implored. Demolish the derelict, abandoned housing behind your church and place the parking lot there! The idea made sense. The future church, its parking lot, and the Concert Garden will co-exist.

Gardeners Have Reasons to Make Gardens Permanent

Still in the back of every community gardener's mind lies the real fear of losing or having to fight to save a garden that they nourished with time, labor and personal monies. Though they were once abandoned vacant lots, the garden lands do have owners somewhere. The gardeners, as self-appointed caretakers, can lose the land.

"It is usually the nicest gardens where outside developers want to build. That area is usually a clean, visually-pleasing tract with conscientious neighbors nearby," states **H. R. Draper III**, Urban Garden Advisor with Penn State's Urban Gardening Program. **Claire Power**, Executive Director of The Neighborhood Gardens Association (NGA) adds: "If the gardens would begin to disappear, the overall collective loss would be detrimental to the neighborhood."

Snapshot: NGA Point Breeze Gardens

Protected: 6 gardens
Preservations-in-Progress: 3 gardens
Garden Ages: "just started" to 20+ years old.
Past History: abandoned vacant lots
Personalities: vegetables, flowers, sitting and "all-reasons"

Profile:
The Concert Garden - An All-Reasons Landscape

Unites "down-the-block" neighbors as well as business and community groups all over Philadelphia. Involved in the garden's initial and continuing development are **CoreStates Bank** (its funders), the **Point Breeze Performing Arts Center**, the **Greater Urban Affairs Coalition**, the **Anti-Graffiti Network** and **The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society's Philadelphia Green Program**. Funding has included summer employment for Point Breeze children desiring to work in the garden.

The tree- and flower-edged garden has a lighted bandstand at its center. It has hosted many artistic performances, including Mellon Jazz Festival concerts.

Status: Soon to be owned by NGA

An Open Space Preservation Strategy

NGA, a land trust committed to protecting community gardens, was impressed by the numerous citizen-run gardens in Point Breeze. Already experienced in protecting gardens throughout the city, NGA challenged themselves to a new idea: an open space strategy focusing on preserving neighborhood garden clusters.

With funding from The William Penn Foundation, NGA began its Point Breeze Neighborhood Open Space Preservation Project in December 1989. One goal was to help Point Breeze determine a plan of balanced neighborhood development. To ensure that garden preservation complemented other development projects, there was extensive collaboration with Point Breeze's civic associations, block groups, institutions, and business groups.

To accomplish project goals and to produce the Point Breeze Open Space Plan, NGA inventoried the vacant land and green spaces, determined short- and long-term appropriateness of the open spaces within the neighborhood context, and assessed neighborhood support for garden preservation. Point Breeze gardens would be preserved upon request and community residents were educated about NGA's garden preservation services.

Today, the NGA Open Space Map and Plan serve as a visual overview of Point Breeze and a strategic neighborhood space planning tool. ''They paint the whole picture,'' states Power. ''The newly-rehabbed house next to the vacant/boarded-up property, the vacant lot next to a community-managed garden...These interrelated details need to be considered in the overall neighborhood planning...''

Haroldline proudly shows her current back window view: *a garden created by Trower and neighbors. Daughter Gloria relaxes in the garden's sitting area.*

Community Gardens Preserved

NGA owns six gardens in Point Breeze with more settlements anticipated. As a property owner, NGA pays the real estate taxes and liability insurance for its gardeners. NGA is a stakeholder in the Point Breeze community and will continue to participate in planning meetings with city representatives and Point Breeze residents.

Looking At Today and Tomorrow

The NGA education process is still very important. NGA works to make sure that people are aware that they can preserve their gardening efforts and hard work. NGA, a private, non-profit land trust, serves as an available resource to assist people with garden ownership options. And as word of NGA's success in Point Breeze has spread, NGA has received inquiries about its services from gardeners and communities throughout the City.

Today, when Haroldline gardens that lot behind her house, her biggest challenge is the weeds. ''Oh, and the garden is bigger...the house next door was demolished...but I have permission and I'm gardening that lot also.''

When the question of ''How much open space should there be?'' arises, clearly the answer is, ''It depends on how much people want and are willing to take care of.'' The people of Point Breeze have already shown how much they want gardens.

Who Owns Your Garden?

If you don't own the land, it might be sold. Community gardeners interested in finding out more about preserving their garden are invited to call Claire Power at NGA, 625-8264.

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File copy

***A look out this back window** prompted Point Breeze resident Haroldline Trower to take actions that changed the neighborhood's mindset and landscape.*

...STORY INSIDE

What is NGA?

Neighborhood Gardens Association is a private, local non-profit land trust directly involved in protecting land. Our niche and our mission is to ensure that established Philadelphia community gardens will forever remain gardens: "preserved."

Most community gardeners do not own the land where they garden and are always at risk of being asked to leave the land. NGA can help gardeners reduce that risk by offering assistance with land ownership or leasing options.

Our programs strongly complement the ongoing gardening projects of The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society's Philadelphia Green Program and Penn State's Urban Gardening Program.

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

Preserve a Philadelphia community garden:
Neighborhood Gardens Association
625-8264

For info on how to start a community garden:
The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society's Philadelphia Green Program
625-8280

Food gardening:
Penn State Urban Gardening Program
560-4167

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Claire T. Power, Executive Director
Elayne Lemanow, Editor
Charlotte Kidd
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Well-Preserved

Updates
from
NEIGHBORHOOD GARDENS ASSOCIATION
A Land Trust dedicated to
Preserving Philadelphia's Community Gardens
Volume 3 · Number 2 · Winter 1995

It Rained on Our Parade...and that was good!

Our garden party happened!

On September 22, the **Neighborhood Gardens Association (NGA)**, along with 40 Point Breeze gardeners celebrated the permanent preservation of eight **Point Breeze Community Gardens**. An uninvited guest added another reason to celebrate: heavy rains marked the end of the summer-long drought.

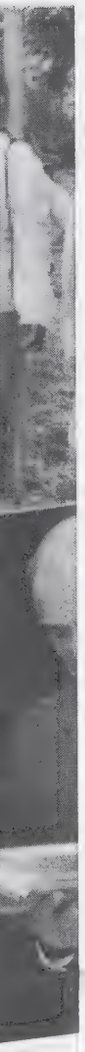
Undaunted by the weather change, last-minute arrangements took our garden party inside the lovely **Landreth Apartments**' social hall (our thanks to **Henry Jefferson**). While the rain watered our thirsty gardens, we proudly honored the many people who made it possible for these once abandoned, trash-strewn lots to now continue as permanent thriving gardens and community hubs.

Signs of Permanence: *Community gardeners proudly display NGA ownership signs to be posted on eight NGA-protected Point Breeze garden gates. Left to right: Alice Shockley, Anna Davis, Alta Felton, Catherine Johnson, Haroldline Trower, Rena Ennis, Mamie Newry, Helen Roberts, Carrie Thomas. Supporters celebrating with them are (back row) Blaine Bonham, Jr., The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, Donn G. Scott, CoreStates Bank, and Claire Power, Neighborhood Gardens Association.*

Traveling to Point Breeze and celebrating with us were gardeners from other NGA-preserved gardens, NGA Board members, and numerous staunch supporters of NGA's mission: preserving community-maintained gardens created from abandoned land. Also attending were **The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society's Philadelphia Green Program** and **Penn State Urban Gardening Program** staff members, many of whom had helped Point Breeze residents build these gardens from rubbled terrain.

Gardeners, NGA Board members, neighborhood residents, individual supporters, and local government representatives all got to know each other as they mingled and shared refreshments. Proud gardeners bragged as they showed pictures of their flourishing community vegetable and flower gardens.

In this issue, we present our celebration of preservation in pictures...please join us.



Blue Ribbon NGA Gardens

Participating in two **Pennsylvania Horticultural Society** events, NGA sites once again won recognition and prizes for their gardeners' skillful techniques. The NGA winners are:

City Gardens Contest (held in cooperation with the **Penn State Urban Gardening Program**):

Community Children's Garden

16th & South Streets	2nd place
Seedy Acres Kids	3rd place

Large Community Vegetable Gardens

3rd & Christian Streets	2nd place

Small Community Flower Gardens

Stillman & Parrish	2nd place

Harvest Show Sweepstakes

Extra Large Gardens

3rd & Christian	1st place
Church Lane	2nd place

Small Gardens

Seedy Acres	3rd place

VACANT FACTS

Philadelphia...is now scarred by 15,800 vacant lots and 27,000 vacant structures -- enough, if they were in one parcel, to fill the entire downtown.

Source: The Philadelphia Inquirer, Friday, November 10, 1995, Commentary, Neal R. Peirce

Devastating figures, no doubt. However, across the city, neighborhood people are making productive use of these visible but forgotten lands by turning them into community gardens.

At the gardeners' request, NGA will acquire these gardens. As landowners, NGA carries liability insurance, generates revenue for the city by paying property taxes, and turns a neighborhood's creative solution into a permanent community asset. A formal garden agreement between NGA and the gardeners states that the gardeners can continue doing what they do best: gardening.

NGA is committed to working with gardeners who play an active, positive role in making productive use of abandoned, vacant land.

Permanence Brings A Future

Now that their garden is permanently preserved by NGA, **Point Breeze Concert Garden** members are making plans for its future. Gardeners have applied for and have received a grant from **The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society's Philadelphia Green Program** for lighting and garden surface upgrades.

Formally honored by NGA and the gardeners for their vital roles in creating and preserving Point Breeze gardens were **Blaine Bonham, Jr.,** Vice-President, Programs, **The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society**, in recognition of the Society's direct help in garden creation and preservation; **Donn G. Scott,** Marketing President, Metropolitan Region, **CoreStates Bank**, for the bank's role in underwriting the Concert Garden's installation costs; **The William Penn Foundation** who shared NGA's vision and funded NGA's Neighborhood Preservation Project in Point Breeze; **Mayor Edward G. Rendell**, whose supportive City administration made these garden efforts possible; and last, but not least, **Councilwoman Anna C. Verna**, a tireless advocate for greening in Point Breeze. Her support and assistance were a steady partner to NGA's preservation efforts. **Claire Power,** NGA Executive Director, concluded the ceremonies by presenting each of the eight Point Breeze garden representatives with a sign to hang on their garden's gate. The sign proclaims NGA's ownership of the garden "...for the community to plant and enjoy."

As if on cue, the rain stopped as we concluded our awards ceremony. Going ahead with our garden-touring plans, we boarded a **Fairmount Park Trolley**, stopping first at the Concert Garden. We proudly hung the NGA *Permanently Preserved* sign to let everyone know that this former vacant lot, turned into a community garden by neighborhood people, was here to stay. Then, under clear skies, we went on to show off the remaining seven gardens.

Photos by Ira Beckoff

Nine equals Nineteen

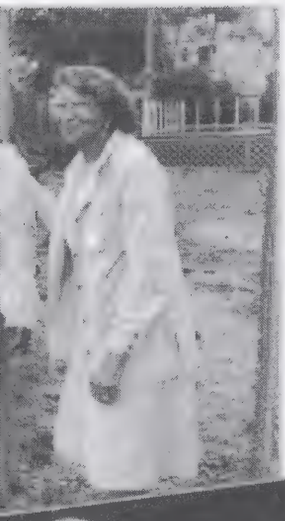
The party's over and we're still celebrating! A ninth Point Breeze garden,

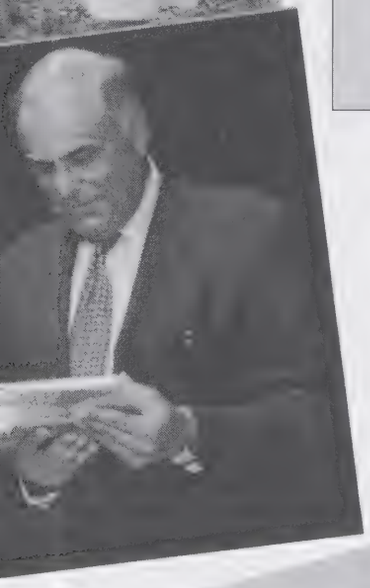
1306-08 S. 24th Street

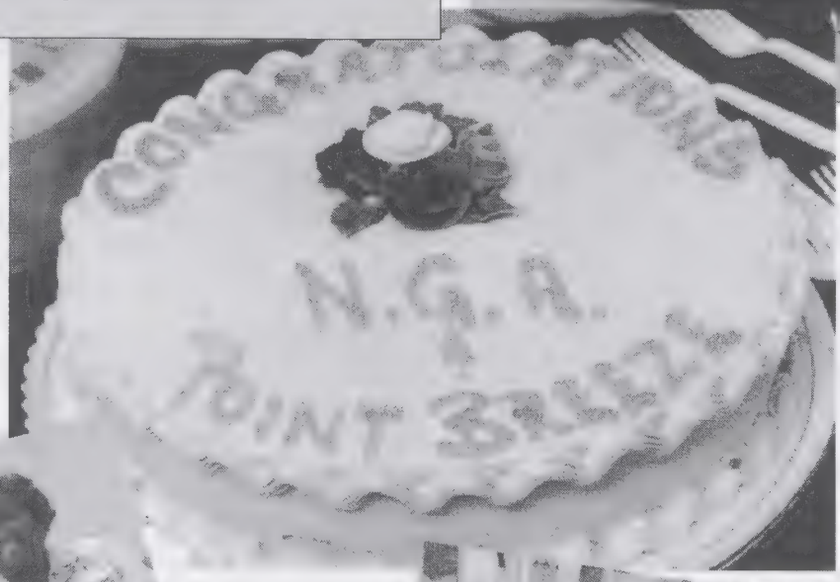
has been acquired and permanently preserved by NGA. There are now 19 NGA-protected gardens across the city.

The Preserved Gardens of Point Breeze

2056-60 Ellsworth Street
1426-30 S. Taylor Street
2149 Ellsworth Street
2111 Titan Street
1222 S. 17th Street
1315 S. 22nd Street
1348-50 S. Bouvier Street
2127 Federal Street







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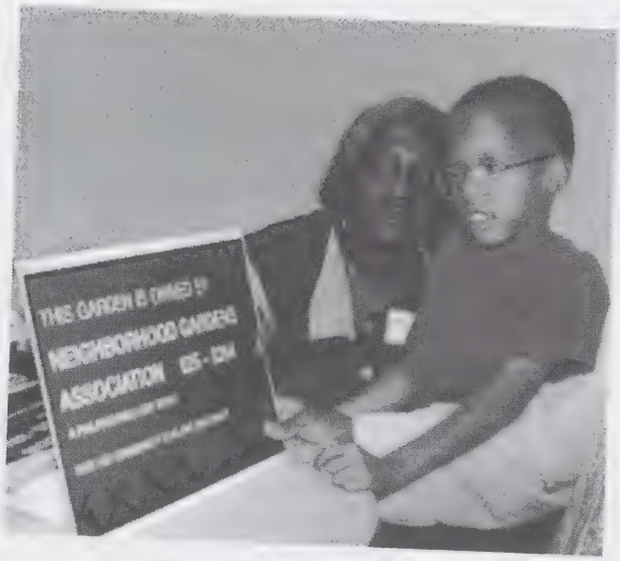

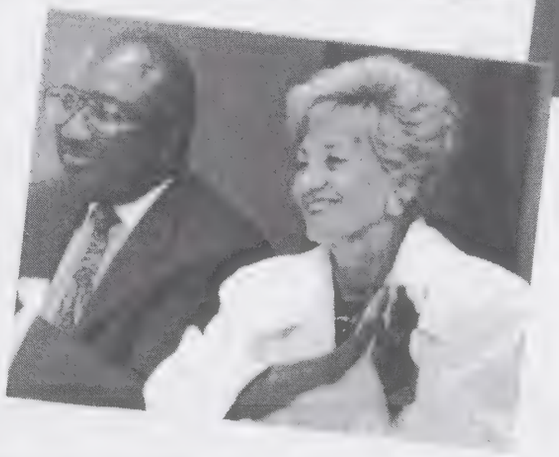

Who Owns <u>Your</u> Garden?

If you don't own the land, it might be sold. Community gardeners interested in finding out more about preserving their garden are invited to call Claire Power at NGA, 625-8264.

"No vacancy" is good news in Point Breeze. Off to celebrate are NGA Board members Hayward Ford, President and Donald Felley, Finance Chair. Party details inside.

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Volume 4 • Number 1 • Spring 1996

This Land Is Whose Land????

Vacant, abandoned land. Yours for whatever you want to do on it? Park your car on it? Grow a garden on it? Use as a trash-site? Maybe. For awhile. Until the owner tells you otherwise. Yes, the land may be untended, but it has an owner, somewhere.

Working directly with those who garden abandoned vacant land, NGA contacts the land owner, offering to take land ownership to make sure the garden improvements will be permanent. Real estate acquisition options are dependent on the ownership circumstances. For example, is the land privately or publicly owned?

NGA begins negotiations only at the request of the gardeners and the surrounding community. In this issue, we talk about the Stillman Street garden which was located on privately owned land. NGA purchased the land outright.

In upcoming issues, we will discuss other acquisition methods when land is owned by a government agency or its subsidiary.

Please turn the page and enter the Stillman Street Garden.

Elayne Lemanow, *Editor*

Twentieth Garden Welcomed!

Welcome to the **1525 North Street** community garden and its eight gardeners. The garden, located in the city's Spring Garden section, has been added to NGA's *Well-Preserved* list.

There are now 20 NGA-protected Philadelphia gardens.

Partnerships

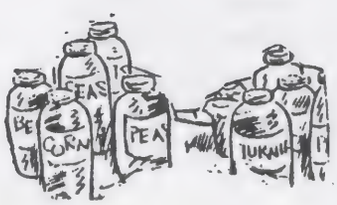
PURP

Community groups involved in using natural resources were invited to apply for $500,000 in Federal government funds administered by **The Philadelphia Urban Resources Partnership (PURP)**.

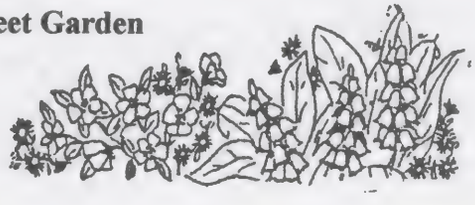
Through these grant funds, three NGA-owned gardens will receive assistance with making upgrades to their fencing, surface, soil, and plant materials.

Additionally, NGA has partnered with **The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society's Education Department** in the presentation of Garden Tenders Workshops. The workshops are attended by potential community gardeners and NGA educates them on garden preservation options, and also provides technical assistance in identifying and locating the owners of vacant property.

(continued on page 2)



Inside: **The Stillman Street Garden**



NGA's LifeVine: Our Committed Friends

Neighborhood Gardens Association's work, preserving community gardens created from trash-strewn lots by neighborhood people, is possible through the committed support of private individuals, corporations, foundations, matching gifts, and awarded grants.

Extending a generous LifeVine to NGA are many Individual garden friends who responded to our annual fundraising drive: both directly and via the **United Way Donor Option Program**. These individual gifts provide project support, enabling NGA staff to carry out its preservation programs.

Matching the gifts of their employees this year were **The Philadelphia Foundation** and **Microsoft Corporation**. And **City Councilman Frank Rizzo** directed a donation from an anonymous garden supporter to our office.

Other support included an annual donation from **The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society**, a corporate gift from **The Rohm and Haas Company**, and awarded grants from **The William Penn Foundation**, **Union Benevolent Association**, and **The Connelly Foundation**.

A warm and gracious thank you from NGA and its gardeners for supporting positive community life through gardening.

You Can Help

Please consider NGA as your annual charity-giving choice or your United Way (08206) workplace gift! Help us grow our gardeners' LifeVine.

Sixth Annual "First Vine-Ripened Tomato" Contest

Attention Philadelphia Community Gardeners!

It's time for NGA's "Sixth Annual First Vine-Ripened Tomato" contest. First and second ripened tomatoes will receive a prize: a gift certificate from Primex.

The contest is a chance for Philadelphia community gardeners to have some rewarding fun with their tomato plantings. An NGA staffperson must see the ripe tomato on the vine. Contestants should call NGA at 625-8264 when the vine-ripened tomatoes appear. We look forward to hearing from you.

Partnerships (Cont'd from Front Page)

OHCD Sideyard Project Begins

NGA has been sub-contracted by **The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society's (PHS) Philadelphia Green Program** to create and implement a pilot sideyard program in Philadelphia's New Kensington section. Under this program, New Kensington residential property owners will be encouraged to apply for the ownership and maintenance responsibility of vacant land adjacent to their properties.

The sideyard program is part of Philadelphia's **Office of Housing and Community Development (OHCD)** grant awarded to PHS to develop an open space and vacant land management plan for the **New Kensington Community Development Corporation**. NGA's role includes identifying parcels adjacent to residential properties, recommending land use, matching properties to users, organizing and presenting information to the community, coordinating the transfer of City-owned property as sideyards, and assisting in locating private owners suitable for the City's Donor/Taker program.

We are Growing

Welcome to **Greg Gregson**, part-time staffperson assisting with the New Kensington sideyard program. He will be playing a key role in mapping and identifying qualifying sideyards.

Formerly an administrative assistant in the 7th Councilmanic District to former **Councilman Daniel McElhatton**, Greg had assisted the District's non-profit agencies, businesses and residents with their personal and neighborhood concerns.

A Garden Preserve - -

The Stillman Street Garden

by Elayne Lemanow

"Grandmom, this is yucky! How come people don't clean up?" asked 9-year old Laura as they walked by the trash-filled lot in their otherwise tidy and clean residential neighborhood. With **Jane Gourley** as her grandmother, it wouldn't stay trashed for long.

It was back in 1971 when the Stillman and Parrish Street house was demolished in the Fairmount section of the city. Located on a windy corner near two stores, the newly-vacant lot collected litter of the candy wrapper and soda bottle variety. However, neighbors picked up the litter and the lot stayed relatively clean.

But this changed over time as the neighborhood's weekly trashbags began accumulating on the lot. **Anna Vaccaro**, living two doors away, made it her personal mission to place accumulated trashbags where City trash collectors would pick them up on their weekly routes. At one point, Anna even posted a sign: "Don't put trash on lot."

Vacant Lot Clean-Up Begins

It was May 1993 when Gourley started cleaning the lot with volunteer help from her son, **John**, a family friend, and neighbor **Bill O'Donnell**. Using their hands, picks, and shovels, they dug up rocks, bricks, and stones, and leveled the ground.

As she cleaned up the lot, Gourley thought "why not make something nice to look at?" Since she had already helped her son start his garden on a small vacant lot the previous year, she knew what to do. Thus, began the trips to the **Fairmount Park Recycling Center** for mulch and soil. Trash cans filled with dirt and mulch were personally carted back to the lot by Jane and her crew.

Garden Idea Blossoms

As neighbors learned that Jane needed flowers, donated potted flowers began showing up at the lot. Now that they had soil and flowers to work with, Jane and son John began looking at magazines and flower books for landscaping ideas. Then, the landscaping began!

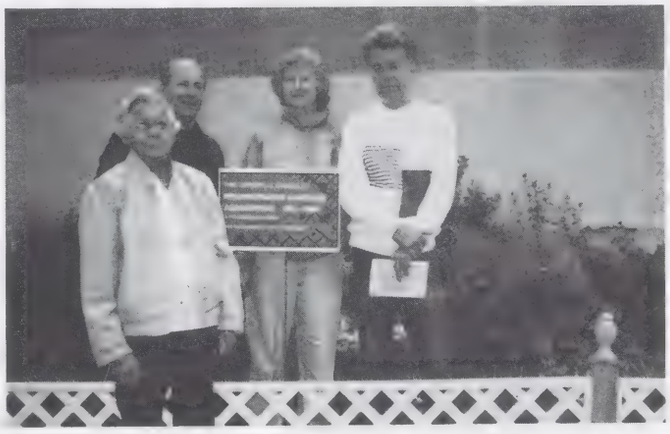
Transforming the dirt, rock, bricks and trash to a lush, brilliantly-colored garden brought mixed reactions from neighbors. "Why are you doing it?" Jane was asked. "I want that lot clean...I pass it every day!" Jane replied. In the meantime, while applauding neighbors assured her that the landowner would appreciate her land-care, others asked if she had the owner's permission. "I didn't lie...I just didn't say yes or no" is how Jane handled that question.

But the land ownership question stuck with Gourley. She wanted to be sure she had the owner's permission to garden on a permanent basis. She didn't come this far to find out that she might be asked to leave.

Garden Preservation: Seeking Answers

At a **Pennsylvania Horticultural Society** (PHS) event, Gourley picked up a flyer on the Neighborhood Gardens Association (NGA), a land trust dedicated to preserving community gardens. She contacted **Claire Power**, Executive Director, who explained that yes, NGA could help Gourley make her garden permanent.

NGA, explained Power, acquires established community gardens for the sole purpose of preserving the land as a garden. Done at the gardeners' request, the process includes locating the owner to negotiate buying the garden or working out leasing options, depending on the circumstances. Once NGA becomes the owner, a formal garden agreement between NGA and the gardeners expressly states that the gardeners can continue gardening the



***Stillman Street gardeners** rally around the newly "planted" NGA ownership sign in their now-preserved garden. L to R: Anna Vaccaro, John Gourley, Jane Gourley, and Bill O'Donnell.*

...the land ownership question stuck...Gourley didn't come this far to find out she might be asked to leave.

land. With great enthusiasm, Gourley asked Power to begin the acquisition process.

As the first step of the process, the landowner had to be located. Upon learning that the lot was privately owned, Power contacted the owner to tell him that Jane had started a community garden, had help with it, and wanted to make it permanent. However, the owner already knew about the garden and recognized the benefit of it: his property was continually cleaned and maintained! Now, with NGA offering to buy the property to preserve it as a community garden, the owner had a decision to make: should he sell to NGA or should he follow through on his tentative plans to build a garage and rent parking space to neighborhood residents on the Stillman Street land parcel?

As NGA negotiated, Jane began gathering signatures from neighbors favoring the garden: signatures from six surrounding streets filled two sides of a page. With evidence of such strong community support, the owner's decision was made. He sold the land to NGA.

Garden Becomes Permanent

The garden was purchased for $8,000, with NGA providing the purchasing ability and staff time for negotiations and paperwork. As part of the acquisition agreement, NGA is responsible for tax payments and providing liability insurance. Over time, the gardeners will pay back 1/2 of the purchase price to NGA. The gardeners' payments will be reinvested by NGA to make future community garden acquisitions possible. As for the gardeners, they will continue as before: gardening and keeping the corner clean. But they will be gardening without the risk of being asked to leave!

Neighbors Caring and Support Continues

Neighborhood support for the garden continues. A floral-decorated can labelled "Donations for Stillman Street Garden" sits on the deli counter every year, raising $90-$125 for gardening materials. The **Fairmount Parent, Business and Neighbors Association, Inc.** (FPBNA) gave $150 to buy flowers and also put blurbs in their newsletter reminding people not to "throw out faded Easter plants. Put them at the back of the garden."

Jane gardens and cleans the sidewalk. Anna Vaccaro keeps an eye on the sidewalk, waters, and provides her hose which stretches down the alley into the garden. Bill O'Donnell weeds and waters the garden while two older men sit across the street, admiring the view and watching out for the garden's general well-being.

Since neighbors recognize the garden as a community asset, the corner stays clean. In fact, a small 18-inch fence is there only to keep the dogs out.

People walking by Stillman and Parrish now have a lot to talk about. The garden is a sea of flowers, both perennial and annuals and includes canna which has grown 6 feet tall. The red and white hibiscus flowers grow as a shrub outside. Finding this unusual, people stop to ask about it. People driving by have been known to stop and take pictures of it. And parents and grandparents who pass by often stop to teach the children the flowers' names.

The garden sparks ideas. The FPBNA created a Green Thumb Award. The Stillman Street garden won the Green Thumb Award and also was a winner in the PHS City Gardens Contest, claiming first prize in 1994 and second prize in 1995. And the ***Girard Home News*** recognized the beauty and importance of local gardens when it included gardens as one of its "10 Best News Stories of 1995."

The neighborhood kids have begun badgering Jane: "When can we plant? Tomorrow? When can we water?" It's clear that summer can't come soon enough!

About Jane

Jane Gourley is a member of the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society and the Fairmount Parent, Business, Neighbors Association, Inc. (FPBNA) Neighborhood Improvement Committee. She regularly looks around her neighborhood to see what needs to be tackled. As a block captain, Jane has also played a vital role in beautifying her neighborhood block with flower boxes and in getting trees for the previously treeless street.

An Exhibit to See

*Gourley and son John, dubbed the "Vigilante Gardeners" for taking over abandoned vacant lots and turning "eyesores into things of beauty" are featured in the "Community Green...Discover Your Neighborhood Gardens" display in the East Gallery of the Central Library, (**Free Library of Philadelphia**), 19th & Vine. The exhibit runs through August 4. Admission is free and the hours are M, T, W 9am-9pm, Th, F 9am-6pm, Sat 9am-5pm, Sun 1-5pm*

How and Where NGA Gets Its Land

Privately owned land:

NGA locates the owner and
1. offers to purchase the land outright for a negotiated sum, or
2. accepts land donated directly to NGA.

If NGA cannot locate the owner, NGA
1. can acquire the property at a sheriff sale if there are delinquent taxes.

Publicly-Owned Land:

Methods vary depending upon the public agency, its disposition criteria, and the property itself.

City-Owned
NGA acquires property directly from the City through the Vacant Property Review Committee (VPRC).

Land Owned by City Agencies
Philadelphia Housing Development Corporation (PHDC) sells it properties.
Redevelopment Authority (RDA) sells or gives away its properties depending upon the size.

Land Owned by the Federal Government
Arrangements are varied and include land being given to another government agency, such as the City. In such a scenario, the City would accept ownership of the land from the Federal government and enter into a license agreement with NGA.

CONNECTING...

Business Volunteers for the Arts (BVA), an organization that recruits, trains and places business executives as pro bono management consultants, has assigned a volunteer from its Computer Consortium program to assist NGA's computer upgrading efforts. We look forward to cost-effective, efficient systems for our ever-growing office needs.....NGA staff participated in a Land Trust Forum sponsored by the **Department of Conservation & Natural Resources (DCNR)** in Harrisburg. The meeting's purpose was to exchange information about the Key 93 Land Trust grants program, and to review and evaluate the process so it can be improved for the next round of funding. Discussion also centered on establishing a more viable partnership between DCNR and the **Pennsylvania Land Trust Association (PaLTA)**. NGA is a member of PaLTA, a state-wide group committed to cooperation of the land and water conservation goals among Pennsylvania's land trusts.....Honored for their gardening involvements and named Archangels at a recognition dinner sponsored by the **Penn State Urban Gardening Program** were NGA executive director, **Claire Power**, and NGA Committee member **Sally McCabe**.

Who Owns Your Garden?

If you don't own the land, it might be sold. Community gardeners interested in finding out more about preserving their garden are invited to call Claire Power at NGA, 625-8264.

NEIGHBORHOOD GARDENS ASSOCIATION
A Philadelphia Land Trust
325 Chestnut Street, Suite 800
Philadelphia, PA 19106
Phone: 215-625-8264

Address Correction Requested

Turning the corner on vacant, trash-strewn lots...meet the people who made this community garden happen!

...STORY INSIDE

Non Profit Org.
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Philadelphia, PA
Permit #2301

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

Preserve a Philadelphia community garden:
Neighborhood Gardens Association
625-8264

For info on how to start a community garden:
The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society's Philadelphia Green Program
625-8280

Food gardening:
Penn State Urban Gardening Program
560-4167

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Claire T. Power, Executive Director
Elayne Lemanow, Editor
Sally McCabe, Technical assistance
Printed on recycled paper

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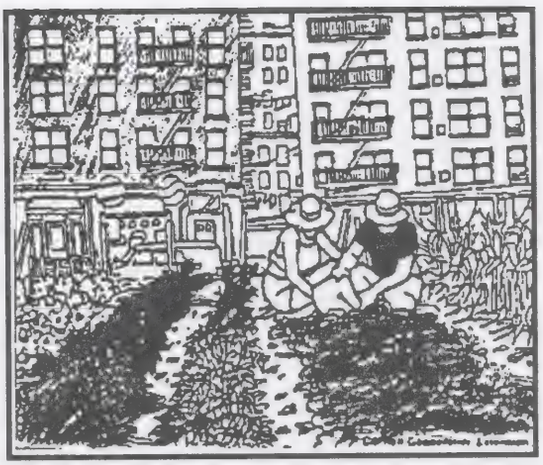
Most community gardeners do not own the land where they garden and are always at risk of being asked to leave the land. NGA can help gardeners reduce that risk by offering assistance with land ownership or leasing options.

Our programs strongly complement the ongoing gardening projects of The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society's Philadelphia Green Program and Penn State's Urban Gardening Program.

Well-Preserved

Updates
from
NEIGHBORHOOD GARDENS ASSOCIATION
A Land Trust dedicated to
Preserving Philadelphia's Community Gardens
Volume 5 • Number 1 • Winter 1997



Power Awarded ACGA National Recognition

Claire Power, NGA's Executive Director, was among eight individuals nationally recognized for outstanding contributions promoting community gardening, greening and open space initiatives in their localities by the **American Community Gardening Association (ACGA)**.

Power was honored because "since she became director (of NGA), the number of gardens under protection increased tenfold, and advocacy on behalf of community open space has dramatically improved."

ACGA, a national organization, promotes the growth of community gardening and greening in urban, suburban and rural North America. Each year, ACGA awards Certificates of Recognition to outstanding greeners.

Welcome on Board!

NGA invested three new Board members, elected officers, and bade farewell to two Board members at the October 4, 1996 Board meeting. Officers are:

President: **Mary Labaree, Esq.**, Federal Reserve Bank
Vice President: **Robert Ross, Esq.**, Kline & Specter
Secretary: **J. Blaine Bonham, Jr.**, The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society
Treasurer: **Patricia K. Frahme, CPA**, Raymond J. Murtaugh and Company, CPA

(continued on page 3)

The William Penn Foundation Supports NGA's New Program

The Neighborhood Gardens Association proudly announces the receipt of a three-year grant from The William Penn Foundation in support of its new community outreach program. The program will benefit over 200 Philadelphia community garden groups who garden City-owned land and wish to learn about and be assisted in making their gardens permanent.

photo by Ira Beckoff

***Gerry Wang of The William Penn Foundation (seated, far right) presents** NGA's Executive Director Claire Power (center) with a three-year Foundation grant supporting NGA's new outreach program. NGA Board President Mary Labaree (seated) looks on along with other Board members (left to right) Richard Camitta, Terry Mushovic, Patricia Frahme, Hayward Ford, Joanne Jackson, Jametta Johnson, Blaine Bonham, Barbara Kaplan, and NGA staff, Greg Gregson and Elayne Lemanow*

New NGA Program Benefits Gardens on City-Owned Land...*see next page*

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Land Owned by City Agencies

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Redevelopment Authority (RDA) sells or gives away its properties depending upon the size.

Land Owned by the Federal Government

Arrangements are varied and include land being given to another government agency, such as the City. In such a scenario, the City would accept ownership of the land from the Federal government and enter into a license agreement with NGA.

New NGA Program Benefits Gardens on City-Owned Land

Gardeners harvesting City-owned land enter into Urban Gardening Agreements with the City that are renewable on a yearly basis for a maximum period of five years. When the five year period expires, permission to garden the land also expires. Gardeners wishing to continue their garden must then make permanent ownership arrangements to acquire the land. NGA will provide realistic ownership options and strategies to these gardeners.

Garden preservation options vary. Some preservation options, such as ownership by NGA, are usually effective for community gardens. However, individuals maintaining the land as sole gardeners will be encouraged and assisted to pursue suitable preservation options, such as private ownership of their gardens.

The goal of the program is to minimize the number of gardens which could otherwise be lost because gardeners were unaware of or did not act on their options. Currently, over 200 gardening groups have Agreements with the City that have expired or will expire in the next few years. Gardeners interested in learning more about their garden preservation options are encouraged to call NGA at 215-988-8797.

NGA Winning Gardens!!

Participating in two **Pennsylvania Horticultural Society** events, NGA sites once again won recognition and prizes for their gardeners' skillful techniques. The NGA winners are:

City Gardens Contest

(held in cooperation with the **Penn State Urban Gardening Program**):

Community Flower/Sitting Garden	
Stillman & Parrish Sts.	1st place
Large Community Vegetable Gardens	
3rd & Christian Sts.	2nd tie
1500 Grays Ferry Ave.	2nd tie

Harvest Show Sweepstakes

Small Garden	
Kauffman Green	3rd place
Large Gardens	
Seedy Acres	2nd place
PHS Certificate	
Seedy Acres	Most Blue Ribbons

Welcome on Board *(continued from front page)*

Continuing on our Board are: **Richard Camitta**, President, Camitta Bros., **Donald Felley,** Retired, Rohm and Haas Company, **Hayward Ford**, Aspen Farms Community Garden, **Barbara Kaplan**, Executive Director, City Planning Commission, **Terry Mushovic**, Director, Penn State's Urban Gardening Program, **Delbert S. Payne**, Retired, Rohm and Haas Company, and **Kenneth L. Woodson**, Senior Vice President, Operations, Philadelphia Zoo.

Joining the Board are **Jametta Y. Johnson**, Philadelphia Housing Authority Planning Analyst, **Joanne Barnes Jackson, AICP**, a gardener at the NGA-preserved Warrington Garden and partner, Jackson & Kihn, a firm specializing in land use planning, and **Patricia K. Frahme**, CPA, who will serve as Treasurer.

Two members moved on to other preservation pursuits and we thank them for their NGA commitment: **James L. Brown, IV**, President, Parkside Historic Preservation Corp., and **Beverly Coleman**, OMG Center for Collaborative Learning.

Board members are nominated for three year terms with staggered rotations and represent a mix of three groups: community gardeners, persons with technical expertise that will assist NGA, and others from the community-at-large. The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society's Philadelphia Green and Penn State's Urban Gardening Programs each have ex-officio seats.

NGA's New Location

NGA has moved. Our new address and phone numbers are:

The Neighborhood Gardens Association/
A Philadelphia Land Trust
100 N. 20th Street, Suite 209
Philadelphia, PA 19103-1443
Phone: 215-988-8797
Fax: 215-988-8810

Also located in our new building is The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, one of NGA's founders. NGA continues to work closely with PHS on various open space greening projects.

To Our Friends: Mail Alert

Did Your Thank You Letter Arrive?

Oops! This is awkward but here goes: We are asking you, our friends, to contact us if you have made a recent donation which was not acknowledged.

It seems that the only one having difficulty finding us at our new location is the Post Office. We became aware of this problem when we investigated the delayed mail delivery of your valued responses to our Fall 1996 annual appeal letter.

We have continued to follow up on this matter with the Post Office and are happy to say that, although they arrived very late, many of your mail responses have been received. However, we're still not certain if the matter is entirely settled. Please let us know if you made a gift to NGA that was not acknowledged.

Thank you!

You Can Help

NGA projects are possible because of generous support from individuals, grants and foundations.

Please consider NGA as your annual charity-giving choice or your United Way (08206) workplace gift! Help us grow our gardeners' LifeVine.

Who Owns <u>Your</u> Garden?

If you don't own the land, it might be sold. Community gardeners interested in finding out more about preserving their garden are invited to call Claire Power at NGA, 215-988-8797

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Inside:

The William Penn Foundation Supports NGA's New Program

NGA Executive Director Receives National Recognition

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Neighborhood Gardens Association
215-988-8797

For info on how to start a community garden:
The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society's Philadelphia Green Program
215-988-8800

Food gardening:
Penn State Urban Gardening Program
215-471-2224

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Land Use: Let Me Count The Ways!

What's the best use of land in a city? Housing? Businesses and community services? Balanced with parks and green space? Yes, this is nice mix.

But what about in-between land: vacant, abandoned parcels that are just sitting there?

Twenty-one years ago, **Libby Goldstein** and neighbors turned the 3rd & Christian Street vacant lot into today's spectacular **Southwark/Queen Village Community Garden**. Deciding they wanted to garden forever, they investigated ways to make the Federally-owned land a permanent garden. Without an organization to turn to, their search took many twists and turns.

Along the way, they met other Philadelphia community gardeners with the same wish. It became clear that a need for an organization providing land ownership options for community gardeners existed. Thus, **The Neighborhood Gardens Association** was born.

We are proud of this NGA-preserved garden and were fortunate to have Libby Goldstein on NGA's Board for many years. Inside this issue: how a simple thought grew a garden and gave birth to NGA, a land trust protecting Philadelphia's community gardens.

Elayne Lemanow, *Editor*

Children's Science Classes Preserved

Preservation #21 : A Multi-purpose Garden

Last fall, many of you learned about **Rainbow Park for Wee and We Thumbs Community Garden, 2527 Jasper Street**, a children's garden that hosts in-garden science classes. Learning the land was for sale, **Sister Grace West**, the garden's founder, wrote us and asked "Could NGA save the garden?" Yes!!

NGA took ownership of Rainbow Park (Philadelphia's Kensington section) in May.

*Saturday morning gardeners at Southwark/Queen Village Community Garden. Left to right are **Sammy Williams, Hattie Nichols, Cynthia Lafferty, Cheryl Rybaki, Dana Mulherin** and **Carla Puppin.***

***Inside*: Southwark/Queen Village Community Garden Story**

A Garden Preserve - -

The Neighborhood's Will: Expressed Through Its Land

Southwark/Queen Village Community Garden

by Elayne Lemanow

In 1975, **Libby Goldstein** decided she wanted more gardening space than her tiny Queen Village rowhouse backyard permitted. From that thought, a huge, abandoned, weedy lot at 3rd & Christian Streets would become a spectacular community garden, **Penn State University's Extension Program** would harvest a demonstration plot and host gardening workshops there; and **Neighborhood Gardens Association**, a land trust preserving Philadelphia's community gardens, would be born.

A larger garden meant community garden. **The Queen Village Neighborhood Association** (QVNA) supported the idea. Libby chaired the new garden committee and together, they "shopped" the neighborhood's vacant abandoned lots. They chose the lot at 2nd & Catherine Streets.

With help from **The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society**, gardeners transformed the lot into a community garden. They had more gardeners than plots, but that could be solved easily, they thought. They would just "shop" for a larger abandoned lot. They would soon learn otherwise.

Gardeners Displaced

The huge weedy lot at 311-333 Christian Street was chosen to accommodate their surplus gardeners. In the midst of developing their second garden, alarming news made its way to the gardeners: huge construction trucks were tearing up their flower beds at 2nd & Catherine Street! The landowner was making way for housing, and the gardeners were exposed to an unnerving reality: even empty, untended vacant lots have owners. And it's the owners who ultimately decide the land's fate, no matter what improvements have been made. The Catherine Street gardeners had to move.

The displaced Catherine Street gardeners joined the 3rd & Christian Street garden. As they moved in, a call from the 4th & Lombard Old Pine Church gardeners came in. The church needed their land back for a community center. "Can we," the gardeners asked, "move into the Christian Street garden also?"

...a disturbing observation emerged...cared-for garden lots were becoming vulnerable as choice sites for new and incoming development, even when untended and trashed vacant lots were close by!

A New Garden Site

Displaced but not discouraged, two sets of gardeners "farmed out" the city landlot. Naming their gardenland **Southwark/Queen Village Community Garden** (SWQV), they celebrated the gentrified neighborhood, embracing both old-timers and new residents. But an uneasy feeling remained: they didn't own this land either. Would they be displaced? And if so, when?

In spite of these concerns, Libby optimistically wrote to **Penn State Extension Service's Urban Gardening Program.** The Program's aim was to provide low-income families with fresh food. The Program had Federal money for gardens and Philadelphia was one of 6 (later 23) cities funded nationally.

New Site Becomes Demonstration Garden

In its second year, SWQV became part of the Urban Gardening Program. And Libby, who started out by simply applying for the Program's funding, had immersed herself in the planning process. Favorably noticed, she was hired as the Extension Service's Urban Gardening Coordinator!

Southwark/Queen Village community demonstration garden flourished. Federal funds supported a demonstration plot and in-garden educational services. **The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society's Philadelphia Green Program** and other organizations brought materials and hands-on technical assistance to the gardeners at large.

Garden Permanency Concerns

But beneath the upbeat spirits, two questions lingered: "Will we be displaced from this garden?" And "what do other vacant-land gardeners do to keep their gardens?" As they sought out other community gardeners, many stories of gardener displacement emerged. At first, the reasons made sense.

Tomato Contest Winners

First prize goes to **Yvonne Mason, Point Breeze** resident and **Garden of Eatin'** community gardener **(25th & Dickinson)** and second prize to **Sue Finch** of the **East-West Germantown Neighborhood Garden, (6100 Germantown Ave.)** in the "First Ripened Tomato on the Vine" contest sponsored by the Neighborhood Gardens Association.

***Sue Finch**, second-prize winner, **East-West Germantown Garden**, with her improved grafitti.*

Winning made gardening that much more therapeutic to Yvonne Mason, recently diagnosed with Uveitis. Now legally blind, Yvonne noticed her tomato was getting "light," but her mother Rosetta Little, also a veteran gardener, told her "No, that tomato is red and ripe." Yvonne's lifelong gardening interest has become her full-time therapy where she finds inner-peace amongst the growing flowers, vegetables and chirping birds.

As for Sue Finch, her garden site was an empty lot five years ago. Then Sue turned it into a flower and vegetable community garden with the landowner's permission and had its graffiti transformed into murals. Sue has invited schoolchildren to the garden where they have participated in gardening activities. She is exploring future gardening projects with the local high school.

***Yvonne Mason**, first-prize winner, **Garden of Eatin'**.*

The "First Ripened Tomato on the Vine" contest is an annual event sponsored by the Neighborhood Gardens Association. When the vine-ripened tomatoes appear in the garden, contestants call NGA and a staffperson comes out to inspect the tomato. Prizes go to the first and second caller.

In Memoriam: Rena Ennis

Rena Ennis, enthusiastic gardener, friend, advisor and tireless NGA advocate, passed away this past June.

Active in three community gardens (including **NGA-preserved 1426-30 S. Taylor St.)**, Rena believed in and personally knew the importance of community garden preservation. Friendly and constantly meeting community gardeners, Rena always "chatted up" NGA's services, steering other gardeners to NGA.

Rena will be sorely missed.

How and Where NGA Gets Its Land

Southwark/Queen Village Community Garden
3rd & Christian Streets

NGA's acquisition methods vary, depending if the land is privately or publicly owned. The 3rd & Christian Street property was Federally-owned.

In this case, the City accepted ownership of the Federally-owned land and then entered into a license agreement with NGA. Technically, NGA does not "own" the garden, but the license with the City renews yearly. Additionally, the deed restricts the land's use to recreation purposes.

You Can Help

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Please consider NGA as your annual charity-giving choice or your United Way (08206) workplace gift! Help us grow our gardeners' LifeVine.

There was the North Philadelphia garden, replaced with much-needed housing. And in South Philadelphia, the garden was replaced by much-needed industry. Though gardeners were disappointed to lose their garden, the new land use was understandable and welcomed.

But as they heard more stories, a disturbing observation emerged. It seemed that cared-for garden lots were becoming vulnerable as choice sites for new and incoming development, even when untended and trashed vacant lots were close by!

A good example was one of the South Philadelphia gardens. Displaced gardeners had to move down the block and start up again, only to have to move across the street and start up once more. All the while, close-by vacant lots went unclaimed, untended and unchosen! Why, wondered the gardeners, couldn't those lots be chosen for development?

Even more disturbing was that throughout the city, displaced gardeners had little recourse other than Penn State's earnest negotiations to find them another garden spot.

Garden Ownership Options Sought

The Southwark/Queen Village gardeners, hearing the stories and knowing they wanted to garden forever, were now considering permanent acquisition of their own garden. They contacted the **Trust for Public Lands** (TPL), a nationwide organization that conserves land for people.

Upon meeting with TPL, an ongoing relationship revolving around preserving Philadelphia's community gardens began. Participating in the TPL talks were City representatives, Penn State, Philadelphia Green, SWQV, and other concerned Philadelphia community gardeners. Over several years, they would learn about land preservation strategies, including the option of creating a land trust in Philadelphia to preserve the gardens.

Startled Gardeners Learn Their Garden is For Sale

As SWQV participated in the TPL land preservation talks, the unthinkable happened: SWQV garden's current landowner, the Federal government, labelled the land "excess property," and put it up for sale. It was 1983 and the garden was seven years old.

Theoretically, the gardeners always knew their gardenland could be put up for sale by its owner. But having successfully gardened through two previous ownership changes, this was a reality jolt! The only thing in their favor was that Federal land was not aggressively marketed.

SWQV gardeners were now spurred on with a sense of personal urgency to save their garden. While continuing to participate in the general TPL land preservation talks, the SWQV gardeners put on their active citizen hats. They contacted local officials for guidance in saving the garden.

Meeting with various federal agencies in **The Honorable Thomas Foglietta's** Washington office, they learned that their garden could come under the control of a **National Park Service** program that retained Federal land for recreational use "in perpetuity." They began working with the National Park Service.

Philadelphia Community Leaders Form Land Trust

Parallel to the SWQV gardeners' talks with government officials, the TPL general land preservation talks also continued. As a result, **The Neighborhood Gardens Association/A Philadelphia Land Trust** (NGA) was formed, spearheaded by City representatives, the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, community gardeners and Libby, both in her role as Penn State Extension Service Coordinator and as an active SWQV gardener.

The land trust, incorporated in July, 1986, hired an Executive Director in 1988 and became an available resource to community gardeners wishing to preserve gardens started on vacant abandoned land. And in 1991, NGA and the SWQV gardeners would meet on the preservation path.

SWQV Gardeners Have Mini-Preservation Success

In the meantime, SWQV gardeners continued their independent talks with government officials about preserving SWQV "in perpetuity." They met with some success: in 1985, the SWQV garden was leased

*Birdwatching, **Carla Puppin** (forefront) points out an American Goldfinch to **Dana Mulherin** as they stand next to the barbecue pit in the garden's social area.*

to the City by the National Park Service for ten years. The lease, restricting the land's use to "recreational gardening," was the first of its kind nationally. It represented a compromise plan advanced by the representing governmental officials.

A 10-year lease!! That was exhilarating news, but it didn't guarantee permanency. The gardeners were still uneasy. Gardeners again asked local officials "How can we make our garden permanent?"

Moving Closer to Permanent Preservation

In 1991, supported by then-**Mayor Goode** and other elected officials, gardeners once again wrote to the National Park Service. They wanted the City to actually own their garden instead of the current leasing arrangement with the National Park Service. The gardeners learned that the National Park Service had a program that gave "surplus property" to cities for recreational use "in perpetuity." Immediately, the gardeners, the Penn State Urban Garden Program, and the City of Philadelphia began working with the National Park Service to transfer the property into City ownership.

Noting that the land was receiving excellent care, both the National Park Service and the **General Services Administration**, the government arm that sells property, agreed to give the garden to the City. As in the previous leasing arrangements, the deed still restricted that the property "continue to be used for...recreation purposes." The deed further stated that in the "event the property...is no longer used for such purposes...title thereto shall revert to U.S."

The Million Dollar Question

The SWQV gardeners had come a long way in their independent garden preservation efforts. However, the City would not take ownership until one million dollars worth of liability insurance was provided. The garden could not afford it, nor could the Queen Village Neighborhood Association. However, The Neighborhood Gardens Association could provide such a policy as part of its services.

NGA, the land trust born out of the general land preservation talks and committed to preserving Philadelphia's community gardens, was now five years old. Actively preserving gardens for three years, NGA had completed three preservations and was finalizing six more. And Libby, a vital part of NGA's formation and a current Board member, was familiar with NGA's knowledge, resources, and preservation successes. She urged gardeners to consider NGA for help in meeting the liability insurance requirement.

Preserved At Last

NGA entered into a License Agreement with the City. The City then took ownership and NGA, as the licensee, continues to carry liability insurance on the property. The arrangement has been in existence for four years. Even though NGA does not "own" the garden, the license renews yearly, with the deed restricting the land's use to recreation purposes. Under these arrangements, the garden can go on forever.

The Southwark/Queen Village Garden's yearly traditions bring a reassuring rhythm to the gardeners.

***Hattie Nichols**, a resident of the Southwark high-rise (background), shows off her "front yard."*

Annually, they sign a Garden Agreement with NGA. Through their signature, individual gardeners acknowledge that NGA has entered into a License Agreement with the City of Philadelphia and agree to abide by the its terms. With NGA as the licensee, gardeners no longer harbor an imminent fear of losing their garden.

It's 1997. Southwark/Queen Village, one of Penn State's original demonstration gardens, is 66 plots strong, boasts an orchard, a bee farm, and an abundance of flowers and vegetables often shared with the community.

Happy 21st Birthday!

Who Owns Your Garden?

If you don't own the land, it might be sold. Community gardeners interested in finding out more about preserving their garden are invited to call Claire Power at NGA, 215-988-8797

NEIGHBORHOOD GARDENS ASSOCIATION

A Philadelphia Land Trust
100 N. 20th Street, Suite 209
Philadelphia, PA 19103-1443
Phone: 215-988-8797

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Southwark/Queen Village Community Gardeners
Cynthia Lafferty, Max Johns and Maryanne Galeota.

...Story Inside

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

Preserve a Philadelphia community garden:
Neighborhood Gardens Association
215-988-8797

For info on how to start a community garden:
The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society's Philadelphia Green Program
215-988-8800

Food gardening:
Penn State Urban Gardening Program
215-471-2224

Well-Preserved is a publication of the **Neighborhood Gardens Association/ A Philadelphia Land Trust**
Claire T. Power, Executive Director
Elayne Lemanow, Editor
Sally McCabe, Technical assistance
Printed on recycled paper

What is NGA?

Neighborhood Gardens Association is a private, local non-profit land trust directly involved in protecting land. Our niche and our mission is to ensure that established Philadelphia community gardens will forever remain gardens: "preserved."

Most community gardeners do not own the land where they garden and are always at risk of being asked to leave the land. NGA can help gardeners reduce that risk by offering assistance with land ownership or leasing options.

Our programs strongly complement the ongoing gardening projects of The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society's Philadelphia Green Program and Penn State's Urban Gardening Program.

Well-Preserved

Updates
from
NEIGHBORHOOD GARDENS ASSOCIATION
A Land Trust dedicated to
Preserving Philadelphia's Community Gardens
Volume 6 • Number 1 • Summer 1998

Victory at 18th & Glenwood

by Lauri Brunton

"Oh yes, we have plans: We're gonna get some lights, air conditioning, and maybe some knicknacks for the old caboose that sits near the railroad tracks in our garden. We'd like to have a new watering system with rubber hoses instead of the plastic pipes we've had for years. Then we're gonna have a big party next fall."

Jimmie Taylor, along with the 87 other gardeners at the four acre **Glenwood Green Acres**, located along the Amtrak rail line near the North Philadelphia station, has reason to plan. It's the first time in quite a while that they're certain their garden will be there in the spring.

Back in 1996, a bright orange Sheriff's Sale notice had appeared on the garden. The sign was a great shock to the gardeners who had gardened there for 13 years. "We were all very upset," said Jimmie. "I got in touch with **Claire Power**, Executive Director at the **Neighborhood Gardens Association (NGA)**, for help."

From that moment on, NGA, whose mission is to help community gardeners who risk losing their gardens, dedicated itself to saving Glenwood Green Acres.

Power attended Sheriff Sales for months before the property finally came up for bid in October. Said Claire, "The biggest risk would be if NGA was outbid, then someone else would leave the sale owning the garden."

When the auctioneer announced the sale price starting at $25,000, Claire stood up. Moments later, the property was theirs. Claire couldn't wait to tell Jimmie the news: "After signing some paper work to finalize the deal, I called him from a pay phone outside. I was thrilled. The gardeners had been in such turmoil for months, they didn't even have their annual fall barbecue last year for the first time in 13 years."

(continued on back page)

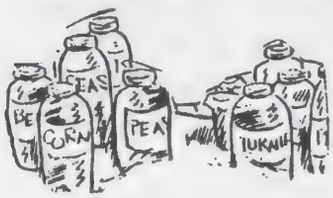
Photo by Ira Beckoff

Jimmie Taylor, Glenwood Green Acres founder.

Now We Have 23!!

NGA recently completed two major preservations bringing the NGA-preserved garden total to 23.

Glenwood Green Acres (18th & Glenwood) was acquired through bid at Sheriff Sale. The **Bel Arbor Tree Farm** and **Kimball Street Community Garden's** preservation path was one of community greening and commercial development becoming friends. Both stories are inside this issue.



A Garden Preserve - -

A Pharmacy, A Tree Farm and A Garden

by Elayne Lemanow

Nine months of grassroots community efforts show commercial development and neighborhood greening can co-exist.

When the **Torre Clothing** factory burned down in 1992, left behind was a huge, gaping, vacant lot where the building once stood. Watching the empty land accumulate trash, back-door neighbors, **Carla Puppin** and husband **Larry Lindsay** organized neighborhood clean-ups. But clean-ups were useless since new trash just replaced the old. They began searching for permanent ways to keep the lot clean.

Community Land Care Advice Sought

Seeking community land management advice from **Claire Power, Neighborhood Gardens Association's (NGA)** Executive Director, Puppin learned of **The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society's** innovative new program: growing tree farms on Philadelphia's inner-city vacant lots.

The program's basic premise is to convert the city's idle, abandoned vacant lots into tree farms. In turn, neighbors actually plant, grow and care for the trees which are then recycled back into the neighborhood's very own streets, backyards, and parks. The Society had funding available and was, in fact, looking for a new tree farm site in South Philadelphia.

***Bel Arbor Tree Growers planting trees** on their now smaller plot of land as construction begins for the CVS Pharmacy in the background.*

Community Tree Farm & Garden Plans Begin

Presented with the idea, the vacant lot's landowner enthusiastically agreed to the tree farm idea under one condition. Residents must "form an organized group." Explaining that he still planned to develop the land, he wanted to be able to communicate with an organized group when that time came.

Through the winter of 1995, Bella Vista neighbors formed **Bel Arbor, Inc.** and attended **Philadelphia Green's Tree-Tender** classes while the landowner put a chain-link fence around his property lines to protect the future tree farm. And in April 1995, neighbors planted close to 1,000 trees.

Meanwhile, as they grew trees, Bel Arbor, Inc. and a few other neighbors approached the **Christ's Presbyterian Church** that bordered the tree farm. With the Church's permission, they set up the **Kimball Street Community Garden** that now colorfully wraps around two sides of the church building. By summer of 1996, a community-managed tree farm and garden flourished on the land.

Flourishing Tree Farm & Garden Threatened

In the fall, when the tree farm was two years old and the garden had blossomed a full summer season, D-day arrived. The landowner presented Bel Arbor with a blueprint of his development plans. The land

How and Where NGA Gets Its Land

Bel Arbor Tree Farm
Kimball Street Community Garden
Washington Ave.-Rear (between 10th & 11th Streets)

NGA's acquisition methods vary, depending if the land is privately or publicly-owned. The Washington Avenue property was privately owned.

In this case, the owner sub-divided the land and entered into a license agreement with NGA. Technically, NGA does not "own" the tree farm and garden but the license with the owner renews yearly for five years. Additionally, the license agreement restricts the land's use to the planting and maintaining of a greenspace and/or community garden

Discussion has begun on the possibility of permanent deeded ownership to NGA.

Glenwood Green Acres *(continued from front page)*

Thankfully, no one will miss the fall feast next year. Jimmie is already planning to roast a 110 lb. pig, and hire a D.J. to celebrate the day.

In the meantime, the gardeners can watch their fruit trees bloom this spring and dream about the many plantings to come.

Reprinted with permission from the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society's Philadelphia Green News, January/February 1998.

Thank you CVS Pharmacy

*Bel Arbor Tree Growers and Gardeners show **Phil Van Roden** (rear, wearing tie), CVS Store Manager, the newly-purchased and much-needed tool shed made possible through a grant from CVS Pharmacy, their new front-yard neighbor.*

***Pete Pecoraio**, CVS Regional Director of Real Estate, made arrangements for the grant.*

NGA's LifeVine: Our Committed Friends

Neighborhood Gardens Association's work, preserving community gardens created from trash-strewn lots by neighborhood people, is possible through the committed support of private individuals, corporations, foundations, matching gifts, and awarded grants.

Extending a generous LifeVine to NGA are many of our **Individual** garden friends who responded to our annual fundraising drive: both directly and via the **United Way Donor Option Program**. These individual gifts provide project support, enabling NGA staff to carry out its preservation programs.

Our support also included an annual donation from **The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society** and an awarded grant from **The William Penn Foundation**.

A warm and gracious thank you from NGA and its gardeners for supporting positive community life through gardening.

You Can Help

NGA projects are possible because of generous support from individuals, grants and foundations.

Please consider NGA as your annual charity-giving choice or your **United Way (08206)** work-place gift! Help us grow our gardeners' LifeVine.

would be neatly divided into Parcel A and B, with **CVS Pharmacy** building a one-story structure with on-site parking on Parcel A, (11th & Washington Streets). Parcel B, (10th & Washington), would also be retail with on-site parking. Its occupant was not yet known.

As Bel Arbor studied the blueprint, they realized that Parcel A and Parcel B displaced the entire tree farm! And, they would also lose part of the Kimball Street Community Garden. Property lines clearly showed that part of the garden belonged to the landowner as well. However, before CVS Pharmacy could be built, the landowner needed a zoning variance approved. "Would" he asked, "Bel Arbor support his zoning requests?"

In actuality, the development plans directly impacted several groups who became known as "The Neighbors." Included were Bel Arbor, Inc. (the tree growers), the Kimball Street Community Gardeners (who wanted to keep their entire garden), the Kimball Street Neighbors (who wanted to eliminate a parking lot entrance on their tiny residential street), as well as the Christ's Presbyterian Church, and the **Neighborhood Town Watch**, (who wanted overall neighborhood concerns represented).

Neighbors Submit Compromise Blueprint to Landowner

The Neighbors' representatives began meeting in Carla's home and invited **Councilman DiCicco** to participate. He would play a crucial role in the eventual positive outcome.

From these meetings, the Neighbors drew up a revised blueprint. Presenting it to the landowner, the Neighbors said "eliminate a few parking spaces by shortening Parcels A & B, keep commercial development on Washington Ave., and create a Parcel C from the remaining northern section of the lot. Then we'll support your development plan and zoning variance request."

Also, the Neighbors said, in addition to creating Parcel C (which includes part of the Kimball Street Community Garden), consider donating it to Bel Arbor. We will care for it as a smaller tree farm and dedicated green space. With that, conversations flurried in all corners.

NGA Contacted

Contacting Claire Power, Carla explained that the landowner and Councilman DiCicco were now aware of NGA as a non-profit corporation with the ability to accept land donations. She also

Bel Arbor

In 1995, a few Bella Vista/Italian Market neighbors formed Bel Arbor, Inc., a non-profit corporation. The group's primary concern was keeping the vacant lot on Washington Avenue (between 10th & 11th Streets) free from trash.

Looking for ideas on keeping the lot permanently clean, a call to The Neighborhood Gardens Association lead them to Philadelphia Green, the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society's outreach greening program. Working with Philadelphia Green, they started the Bel Arbor Tree Farm.

At the request of Bel Arbor and other neighbors, the landowner recently signed a License Agreement with NGA on a subdivision of his land. The Agreement guarantees Bel Arbor's use of the land subdivision for a five year term, subject to renewal from year to year. The land use is solely for planting and maintaining greenspace and/or a community garden.

Bel Arbor members help out with one Bel Arbor event during the year which includes monthly maintenance sessions in the tree farm. Participants learn about trees and gardening, hang out with a fairly nice bunch of people and attend fun-filled Sunday evening work sessions. They also attend Tree Tender classes, and learn to care for trees.

Since becoming a 501(c)3 non-profit organization in 1997, Bel Arbor is eligible for project-related grants and plans to apply for grants for related community outreach projects.

Tree Farms

City tree farms keep vacant lots clean, provide a learning environment for revitalizing vacant land soil and observing trees grow in an urban environment while directly supplying trees suitable for city streets, parks and gardens. The Bel Arbor tree farm began in April 1995 with close to 1,000 neighbor-planted trees.

Starting an inner-city tree farm involves labor and commitment. Typical urban land dirt usually is a combination of poor subsoil, broken bricks, stones, and other debris. At Bel Arbor, the soil was also covered with concrete that CVS offered to remove. The process of making the soil suitable for tree-growing included separating debris from the subsoil and then adding topsoil and organic matter.

Originally, when the landowner set about developing his land, the tree farm was going to be entirely replaced by development. At the neighbors' request, he reconfigured the blueprint, setting aside part of the land as a dedicated greenspace.

Today, 60 trees grow in Bel Arbor's new space. The 940 trees displaced by development were distributed to community organizations throughout the city at a "Bel Arbor Tree Digging Up and Distribution Day."

asked if "NGA would take ownership of any combination of the gardened land and/or tree farm if Bel Arbor convinced the landowner to subdivide and convey ownership?" NGA's answer was an enthusiastic "Yes!"

Meanwhile, CVS reps and district managers studied the Neighbors' revised blueprint. They agreed that the South Philadelphia store didn't need the allotted parking spaces which had been based on the chain store's prototypical development model. And the landowner, also finding the Neighbors' revised blueprint reasonable and well thought-out, revised his original plan to include a newly-created Parcel C.

Neighbors' Plan Accepted

Currently, NGA and the landowner have signed a License Agreement on Parcel C for a five year term, subject to renewal from year to year unless terminated by either party. The License Agreement permits NGA to use Parcel C for the sole purpose of planting and maintaining trees and/or a community garden. Under these arrangements, NGA does not "own" the land. However, discussions concerning permanent deeded ownership to NGA are underway.

Also, through cooperative efforts between The Neighbors and the landowner, Parcels A & B have been rezoned as C-2 Commercial on the City of Philadelphia maps. And there are plans to rezone Parcel C as residential.

Future Seasons Assured

The five year lease agreement took nine months of talks, proposals and counter-offers, explained Carla Puppin, currently president of Bel Arbor, Inc. "But, we presented ourselves as a reasonable group of people with legitimate concerns. And we presented a viable project that's good for our community..."

And Puppin continued, "with the agreement in place, we look forward to developing the site as a green space that can benefit the community in a number of ways."

*Special recognition to **Rebecca Williamson**, former Bel Arbor, Inc. President, who played a vital role in the negotiation process.*

Who Owns Your Garden?

If you don't own the land, it might be sold. Community gardeners interested in finding out more about preserving their garden are invited to call Claire Power at NGA, 215-988-8797

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CVS Pharmacy, the new building on the block** at 11th & Washington Aves., is landscaped with trees from their Bel Arbor Tree Farm neighbors.* ***...Story inside

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Well-Preserved

Updates from

Neighborhood Gardens Association

Preserving community-managed open space since 1986

Vol. 8 • No.1

Spring 2000

In this issue

PROJECT UPDATES

NGA ON THE WEB

FUNDRAISING NEWS

SAVE THE DATE

2 Gardens become whole

Thanks to the city of Philadelphia, 2 NGA gardens are now preserved in their entirety.

2300 E. Cumberland in New Kensington and **2125 Federal Street** in Point Breeze were transferred to NGA ownership completing the preservation of these 2 garden sites.

BEL ARBOR SAVED!

This past December, the owner of 1001 Washington, donated to NGA and the gardeners Parcel C, which is the site of the Kimball Street Community Garden and the Bel Arbor Tree Farm. As some of you may know, the tree farm and garden had already been moved once due to development projects in the area. Thanks to this generous donation, the garden and tree farm will be preserved for future generations.

The Tree Farm was developed in 1995 on a former factory site with the assistance from the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society Philadelphia Green program. Neighbors have been caring for young trees until they were ready to be planted in their neighborhood. In March, 22 trees were moved into their new locations on Christian, League and Montrose Streets through a grant from the National Tree Trust.

Notes From the Director

It has been one year since I became the director of NGA, and it has been a rewarding and busy time.

Last April, a busload of concerned gardeners boarded an NGA bus to lend their support at a NYC rally of gardeners protesting the sale of community gardens. Luckily the gardens were purchased by friendly groups, but the threat still exists there and in most urban areas where community gardens are not preserved.

Over the gardening season, I had a chance to visit all the NGA-owned gardens and meet with neighbors. These 22 sites reflect the variety of greening projects from sitting parks to vegetable and flower gardens. Many of the gardens are over twenty years old, and although they are great gardens could use some physical improvements. Over the next two years, NGA will be working with the gardeners to raise funds to make these improvements with long-term sustainability in mind. Please feel free to contact us with any questions or suggestions you may have.

Terry

NGA PROJECT UPDATES

NGA's New Initiatives for 2000 Receive Funding

Last fall, NGA staff met with gardeners, community organizations and our partners at the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society Philadelphia Green Program and Penn State Urban Gardening Program to discuss new directions for NGA. The result was three initiatives that build on the work NGA has done in the past with an eye towards the future.

On January 31st, we found out that we received a two year grant from the William Penn Foundation to work on these initiatives.

NGA's three new initiatives for 2000-2002 are:

1. Technical Assistance and Education to Community Gardeners

NGA will continue to provide technical assistance and education to community gardeners, community organizations and greening organizations about their land preservation options.

When appropriate, NGA will serve as an advocate for developing and preserving community gardens to improve the quality of life in a neighborhood. As always, NGA will focus on community gardens that are the most threatened by development.

2. Site Preservation Planning for Keystone Gardens and Demonstration Gardens

NGA staff will offer assistance to staff and gardeners at specific PHS Keystone Gardens and Penn State Urban Gardening Demonstration Gardens to develop long-term preservation strategies for their garden sites.

These sites serve as models of how community gardens can work and as training sites for gardening workshops. NGA will assist interested garden leaders and groups at these vital community-managed green spaces with follow-through on these preservation strategies.

3. Leadership and Management Planning with Current NGA-owned Gardens

As of January, 2000, NGA owns 22 community garden sites. Over the next two years, we will develop management plans with the gardeners at all these NGA-owned gardens. The process will include leadership skill-building workshops, as well as physical improvement projects with sustainability and low maintenance the major goals. Fencing, sidewalk repairs and watering systems are the most needed improvements.

NGA Helps Gardeners Understand Five Year Rule

In 1996, 209 garden groups and individuals were the first groups affected by the City of Philadelphia's 5-Year Rule. After years of annual Garden Agreements with the gardeners, the City now wanted gardeners to make permanent arrangements to own their gardens after 5 year of using it as a garden. No longer could gardeners renew their garden agreements indefinitely.

Using a list provided by the City, NGA visited all 209 sites affected by the new ruling from 1996-1999. Only 137 of the groups were actively gardening, and 109 of these groups with assistance from NGA have applied for ownership of their gardens.

This is more than 75% of the gardens on the list. Most will be sideyard transfer to individuals, but all will remain green spaces in their neighborhoods. Support for this project was provided by the William Penn Foundation.

NGA will continue to provide technical assistance to gardeners seeking ownership of their sideyard gardens.

NGA IS ON THE WEB!

This past December, NGA began to develop its own website. You can find us on the world wide web at:
www.ngalandtrust.org

Currently, the website includes basic information about NGA , the gardens we have preserved and our past work to help save the gardens of NYC. We are also developing a resource page for gardeners in Philadelphia as well as other cities around the nation to assist them with urban preservation issues.

We recently submitted a grant to help with further development of the site, including an online forum to deal with issues involving community gardening and open space preservation in urban areas. We will also be extending our coverage of the NGA preserved gardens to include the history of the garden and pictures of the garden and its gardeners.

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

If you have pictures of one of the 23 NGA preserved gardens or would like to contribute a story please contact Shannon, the Website Administrator. She can be reached at the NGA office at (215) 988-8797 or by email:
nga-staff@ngalandtrust.org

FUNDRAISING NEWS

Thanks to our Supporters!

As of March 1, 2000 NGA has received $23, 718 from individuals and family foundations in support of our programs. Our goal is to raise $35,000 by July; so we are well on our way. We appreciate your donation no matter its size.

This year we added a line "in honor of" on the donation slip and have had a number of you write us a note about your honoree. This was inspired by newlyweds who asked people to donate to NGA instead of sending them wedding presents last year. Thank you for remembering us! If you haven't sent in a donation yet, just cut out the donation coupon in this newsletter and send it in. We need your help to make our goal!

Please find enclosed my donation of:

__$25 __$50 __$100 __Other $____

In honor of _____

___ I prefer to remain anonymous

Name: _____

Address: _____

_____

City:_____ State:_____ Zip:_____

Please make checks payable to Neighborhood Gardens Association / A Philadelphia Land Trust and mail to: 100 North 20th Street, Suite 309 Philadelphia, PA 19103

Who Owns Your Garden?

If you don't own the land, it might be sold. Community gardeners interested in finding out more about preserving their garden are invited to call Greg Gregson at NGA, 215-988-8799

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SAVE THE DATE!

MAY 16th

Bel Arbor Tree Farm Benefit Concert Christ's Presbyterian Church
10th & Kimball
7:30 p.m.

Tempesta di Mare will be performing the Lost Lute Concerti of Silvius Leopold Weiss. Tickets are $15 for adults and $5 for children. They can be purchased at the door. For more information, please call (215) 339-0248.

June 17th

NGA Garden Day

A celebration of community-managed open space. Stay tuned for more details!

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

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Terry Mushovic, Executive Director
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Vol. 8 • No.2
Fall 2000

In this issue

GARDEN UPDATES
NGA BOARD NEWS
FUNDRAISING NEWS
CALENDAR

New and Improved!

The updated version of the NGA web site is now online. If you have already visited us online, now is the time to take another look.

Special thanks to the gardeners of the 22 NGA land trusted gardens for submitting pictures and stories.
Visit us at:
www.ngalandtrust.org

ALL ABOARD!

JOIN NGA FOR OUR 1st TROLLEY TOUR OF THE GARDENS

Saturday, September 16th
From 10 AM til 1 PM
Call 215-988-8797 to reserve your seat.
First come, first served, so don't delay.

Don't miss this opportunity to visit some of NGA's 22 preserved gardens. There will be a special stop at the Warrington Annual Porch Sale Fundraiser. Bring money to buy some recycled treasures and some great barbecue cooked right at the garden.

This tour is NGA's way of saying thanks to you for your continued support of the land trust and its gardeners.

Remember seating is limited.

Call Today!

NGA GARDEN UPDATES

Summer Winter Garden Joins the Ranks of Preserved Sites

NGA is pleased to announce that the gardeners of the Summer Winter Garden at 33rd and Race Streets have joined the land trust.

This summer, NGA entered into a Garden Agreement with the Redevelopment Authority on behalf of the gardeners and is currently working on long term preservation of the site.

The garden has a combination of vegetables, flowers, trees, and beehives, as well as a water garden. With the addition of the Summer Winter Garden, there are now 23 garden sites in Philadelphia that are part of the land trust.

NGA Gardens Keep Improving

One of NGA's new initiatives is to work on physical improvements at our preserved sites. This year, new sidewalks have been installed at the gardens on Federal and Stillman Streets. NGA is looking for corporate partners to help pay for water systems at several other sites.

Keith Haring Mural Restored

In 1995, NGA acquired the sitting garden at the corner of 22nd and Ellsworth, as part of a group of gardens in the Point Breeze neighborhood. Adjacent to the garden is a three-story mural that was done in 1987 by the world-renown artist, Keith Haring, as part of an art project for youth run by the Brandywine Workshop. The mural of colorful outlined figures in bright, primary colors was a tribute to the 200th anniversary of the US Constitution.

Time and weather have not been kind to the mural or the garden. This spring the Keith Haring Foundation donated funds to the Department of Recreation Mural Arts Program to restore the mural.

This project has also created renewed interest in the sitting garden. A local landscape architect, Michael LoFurno, has met with the gardeners and is helping to design a garden that will showcase the mural, as well as make the garden more attractive and useful to the neighbors.

Funds for the garden renovations will come in part from the Paul Wolfinger Memorial Fund. Paul was one of the pioneers of the Philadelphia Green program and would have appreciated the mural and garden project.

A dedication of the mural and garden is planned for October.

A PARTNERSHIP WITH THE CITY

Street Administration Focused on Neighborhood Transformation

When Mayor Street came to office in January, he committed himself to improving Philadelphia neighborhoods and eliminating sources of blight. Street recognized that low and moderate income neighborhoods in the City are faced with numerous problems of abandoned cars, deteriorating buildings and thousands of vacant lots.

NGA's Executive Director, Terry Mushovic, was part of the Blight Elimination Transition Committee that made recommendations to the Street Administration about possible solutions to these problems.

One suggestion was to form a new office that could serve as a clearinghouse for all the vacant parcels in the City, especially the tax delinquent privately-owned ones.

Following that suggestion, Mayor Street has named Patricia Smith as the Director of the Neighborhood Transformation Office. She is working with the interested parties in the City to design and implement a system that can more efficiently handle vacant land.

NGA looks forward to being a partner with the City in these efforts.

NGA BOARD NEWS

NGA is pleased to welcome Carol Rice to the board of directors for a three-year term. Ms. Rice is retired from the Department of Recreation and well known in neighborhoods from her 35 years of working with the City.

NGA bids farewell to two board members, Patricia Frahme, our treasurer, and Althris Sheridan, who have retired from the board. NGA thanks them for their service.

NGA board members represent community gardens, horticultural organizations like PHS and the Penn State Cooperative Extension, as well as local businesses and community organizations.

Elections were held at the June Board of Directors' meeting.The NGA officers and board members are:

Joanne Jackson, President
Larry Lindsay, Vice Pres.
Blaine Bonham, Secretary
Don Felley, Treasurer
Rick Camitta
Hayward Ford
Joe Janulewicz
Barbara Kaplan
Mary Labaree
Delbert Payne
Carol Rice

Thanks to all of our board members for their dedication and service.

FUNDRAISING UPDATES

Thanks to our Supporters!

Thanks to NGA's circle of friends, who donated in last year's campaign. Our goal was to raise $35,000 from individuals and family foundations. We surpassed this goal thanks to your support.

This fall you will be receiving a special letter asking you to continue supporting NGA.

New Foundation Support

Since our last newsletter, NGA has received grants from two local foundations to help with general operating expenses.

Grants were received from the Philadelphia Foundation and the Claneil Foundation. We look forward to our partnership with them.

NGA AND UNITED WAY

If you prefer to donate to charities through United Way, we want you to know that NGA is a donor agency. **Our agency code is 08206.**

If we receive 10 United Way donations this fall, NGA will be listed in next year's United Way Donor Agencies book. Being listed aids NGA in reaching new donors. We need your help to reach this goal. If you can donate to United Way through your work, please think about NGA.

If you would like to donate online, online pledge forms are available at the United Way website:

http://home.uwsepa.org/Giving/icare.html

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CALENDAR

SEPTEMBER 16th

Warrington Garden Porch Sale
4730-34 Warrington Ave

This annual event includes numerous individual homes with porch sales as well a flea market at the garden and barbecue. Funds raised from the sale will pay for needed improvements at the garden.

SEPTEMBER 16th & 17th

Harvest 2000... and Beyond
PHS Harvest Show
Horticulture Center

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Neighborhood Gardens Association

A Philadelphia Land Trust

Preserving community-managed open space since 1986

Vol. 9 • No. 1

Spring 2001

In this issue

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Our Mission

The **Neighborhood Gardens Association/ A Philadelphia Land Trust** is a private, non-profit corporation founded in 1986. NGA's mission is to ensure the continuity and long-term preservation of community-managed gardens and open space in low and moderate income neighborhoods.

IMPROVING NGA GARDENS FOR THE FUTURE

Each land-trusted garden has its own set of strengths and challenges. On the whole though, most of the 22 NGA gardens are more than 10 years old and in need of some help with repairing or replacing fencing, redoing sidewalks and installing watering systems. Although individual gardens pay for their day to day expenses, these types of improvements are often too expensive for individual gardens to afford on their own. Now NGA is working to raise needed dollars to help gardeners with these projects.

On page 2 of this issue, there are stories of some of the attempts last year to begin addressing these needs. This year, NGA is meeting with the land-trust gardens to plan for more physical improvements to their gardens.

NGA and the gardeners are grateful to the McLean Contributionship and the Knight Foundation for contributing funds for this season's round of physical improvement projects. Most critical are installing watering systems at some gardens that still rely on city fire hydrants for their source of water. Having direct access for gardeners at these sites is important to the long-term sustainability of the gardens.

This spring, NGA will begin installing four watering systems at the most critical sites.

NGA staff and board members will continue to look for new partners in our efforts to make the NGA gardens stronger and better able to thrive in the future.

NGA GARDEN UPDATES

Ellsworth Mural and Garden Dedication

On October 26th, 100 gardeners and residents of Point Breeze joined NGA and the Mural Arts Program staff in dedicating the restored Keith Haring Mural and NGA garden at 22nd and Ellsworth Streets in South Philadelphia. The three-story mural adjacent to the garden was restored by the Mural Arts Program during the spring of 2000 with funds from the Keith Haring Foundation. Haring's original mural of colorful outlined figures is now as vibrant as it was when he completed it with local art students in 1987.

With help from Michael LoFurno, a landscape architect, from Composite Inc., the gardeners met to redesign the sitting garden and make it more complimentary to the mural and the current needs of the neighbors. New paths were laid out and plant material was planted to reflect the colors of the mural.

The New Kensington Garden Center, Laurel Hill Gardens of Chestnut Hill and Waterloo Gardens all donated plants for the project. Other funds to complete the project came from the Paul Wolfinger Memorial Fund. Paul was one of the early Philadelphia Green staff members. Now the community has a beautiful

The new look of Keith's Garden at 22nd and Ellsworth.

sitting garden from which to enjoy the mural. You can look at more pictures of the garden redesign and mural restoration on both our website and Composite Inc.'s web site:

www.compositeinc.com/haring.html

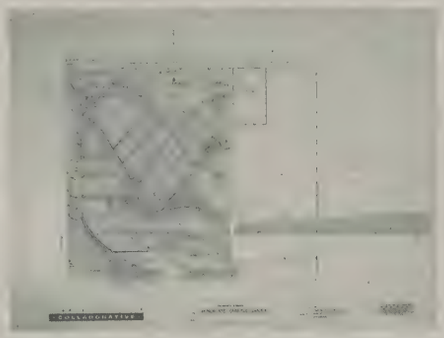
Church Lane Garden Plans for the Future

Over the last year, the gardeners of the NGA garden on East Church Lane in Germantown have been meeting with a landscape architect and architect from the Community Design Collaborative to redesign their almost one acre vegetable garden.

The garden is twenty years old this year and has been part of the land trust since 1991. The garden still has its original fence and plot design which do not reflect the changes in the garden over the years.

Several planning meetings were held in the garden to develop a wish list that the designers could use to create a new plan for the garden. The plan is being finalized and will be the basis of fundraising for the design features including new bed layout and pathways, fencing and sidewalks and hopefully a new watering system by the time it is completed. Stay tuned for more details of the plan in future issues of the newsletter. You can learn more about the Church Lane Garden on our website:

www.ngalandtrust.org



Community Design Collaborative's new design for the Church Lane Garden includes input from the gardeners and the community.

PRESERVATION NEWS

NGA assists gardeners with the New Small Vacant Lot Abatement Program (SVLAP)

Last fall, the Street Administration's Director of the Neighborhood Transformation Initiative, Patricia Smith, kicked off the SVLAP or Small Vacant Lot Abatement Program.

Under this program, city residents and nonprofits like NGA can apply for ownership of vacant lots in their neighborhoods to be used for sideyards and gardens. This initial pilot program will try to move 250 small parcels more quickly through the steps necessary to deal with tax-delinquent, privately held land in the City. NGA has been distributing applications and information about the program to individuals and groups that may qualify.

NGA itself has applied for one parcel of land that is adjacent to one of the NGA gardens in the Spring Garden section of the City. NGA will continue to encourage community gardeners to preserve their neighborhood green spaces.

For more information, contact our office.

NGA Travels to NYC

On February 24th, Terry Mushovic, NGA's Executive Director, and Hayward Ford, an NGA Board Member, traveled to New York City to meet with about 100 community gardeners involved in setting up three new land trusts in their city.

In 1999, the Trust for Public Land (web site: http://www.tpl.org) purchased 64 community gardens that were auctioned off by Mayor Guiliani after months of protest from community residents and organizations like NGA. Since that time, TPL has been working with the gardeners to create 3 land trusts to manage the gardens in the future.

In a panel setting, representatives from NGA and Boston community land trusts shared about the history and challenges of their land trusts and answered questions from the gardeners.

NGA will continue to provide technical assistance and support to the New York City land trusts and looks forward to hosting some of the gardeners in Philadelphia later this year.

Preservation Toolkit on the Web

NGA has been providing technical assistance to gardeners and the community for over 15 years. Recently, NGA expanded its web site to include an online preservation toolkit.

Just click on the link Getting Started / NGA's toolkit. There you will find information about starting a community garden, including sample garden by-laws. If you tend an existing garden that you do not own, there is information on the City's sideyard program, as well as Sheriff's Sale.

Due to numerous requests from other states, there is also information on starting an urban land trust and links to national resources and other urban land trusts across the country.

Who Owns Your Garden?

If you don't own the land, it might be sold. Community gardeners interested in finding out more about preserving their garden are invited to call Greg Gregson at NGA, 215-988-8799

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E-NEWS

Future issues of Well-Preserved will be available via email. If you are interested, send us an email at:

nga-staff@ngalandtrust.org

and we will put you on our recipient list. Initial versions will be text only and later versions will be in Adobe Acrobat pdf format.

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

For information on preserving a Philadelphia community garden:
Neighborhood Gardens Association
Terry Mushovic, Executive Director
Greg Gregson, Preservation Specialist
215-988-8797

For information on how to start a community garden:
The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society's Philadelphia Green Program
215-988-8800

For information on food gardening:
Penn State Urban Gardening Program
215-471-2224

Well-Preserved

Updates from
Neighborhood Gardens Association
A Philadelphia Land Trust

Preserving community-managed open space since 1986

Vol. 10 • No.1
Spring 2002

In this issue

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GET INVOLVED!

OUR MISSION

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GETTING READY TO SPRING INTO ACTION!

Message from the Director

Spring is my favorite time of year. Each year, I still marvel at Mother Nature's ability to bring plants back to life after a winter's rest. Just like the plants, I am also ready to get out there and begin gardening again. Our mild winter has brought on an early showing of spring plants and a hope for gentle rains to nurture them.

This year we will be featuring garden profiles on some of the NGA land-trusted gardens in this newsletter. We will try to tell you about the history and successes community gardeners have had in transforming vacant lots in their neighborhoods into productive, beautiful green spaces for everyone to enjoy. You may want to plan a visit to one of these gardens to see them in person.

Last year, we began making some physical improvements to the NGA gardens. We installed water service connections at six gardens and repaired sidewalks at two other gardens. Look for improvement updates in future issues of Well Preserved as we continue to make these good gardens even better.

As always, we appreciate the contributions made by individuals and foundations to help community gardeners in their efforts to preserve important community gardens. We are all working together to make Philadelphia neighborhoods greener places to live.

Terry

GARDEN SPOTLIGHT: SEEDY ACRES

Seedy Acres Garden blooms and prospers in Northern Liberties

"Through NGA's ownership, and through the determination of the gardeners, the process of creating a balance between open greenspace and housing in this mostly residential neighborhood has began. Knowing that our land is forever preserved as a garden, we can now put our attention on our day-to-day-gardening activities and our community service projects"

Sally McCabe, long time community gardener and leader

Many of the community gardens in the city are tucked away on small streets in diverse, dynamic neighborhoods. This is a particularly good description of Seedy Acres Community Garden in Northern Liberties. Located on Leithgow and Lawrence Streets above Poplar Street, this eclectic site is the garden home of artists and residents of this rapidly changing neighborhood.

In 1984, eight neighbors started this community vegetable garden on six lots so they could grow their own fresh, nutritious vegetables. They enjoyed working outdoors and with each other. Their efforts blossomed and by 1986 they had over 30 adult gardeners gardening 18 lots and a separate section for the kids to garden.

Garden Profile:
Vegetable and flower garden
Year Started:
1984
GARDEN SIZE:
50+ community gardeners
YEAR PRESERVED:
1990/1992
NGA TRIVIA:
Seedy Acres was NGA's first acquisition

Seedy Acres Gardeners were one of the first groups to ask for NGA's assistance in 1986. Gentrification of the neighborhood made the gardeners concerned about losing their gardens to developers in the area. As the garden included 18 different lots and owners, it made it a challenge for NGA and the gardeners. After several years of meetings, petitions, and hearings, NGA took ownership of the three city-owned lots in 1990. This was the first acquisition for our still young organization. In 1992, a former neighbor donated two additional lots to NGA and the gardeners.

In 2001, NGA and the Seedy Acres gardeners applied for ownership of another 5 lots that are still privately owned and tax delinquent as part of the Mayor's new Small Vacant Lot Abatement Program. This program is part of the larger Neighborhood Transformation Initiative that Mayor Street has created to deal with thousands of abandoned houses and the 31,000 vacant lots in Philadelphia. The gardeners and NGA are hopeful that this program will help them secure more of this garden, as well as *(Continues on page 3)*

GARDEN UPDATES

Improvement Update: Church Lane gets Water, New Sidewalks and Street Trees

For their twentieth anniversary, the Church Lane gardeners got a water connection, some new sidewalks, and three street trees to spruce up their gardens last fall.

On an acre lot in the 200 east block of Church Lane in Germantown, approximately two dozen gardeners have grown vegetables and relaxed under the shade of a mature Kentucky Coffee tree for the last two decades. NGA acquired the garden in 1991 and is committed to helping the gardeners keep their garden going.

We have included an excerpt from a letter from Chris Nicolson, the Garden Coordinator. We look forward to a continued partnership with the gardeners at Church Lane.

"While in the Church Lane Garden this weekend, I was aware more than ever, of how much everything about the Garden is due to the generous help we have received from ***NGA****, the Philadelphia Green, and the Horticultural Society: the land, the new water system (a real life saver for some gardeners this season), picnic table, landscaping and many other things.*

It is good to know that we have three strong, interested organizations standing behind us providing support and guidance. "
Chris Nicolson

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

We have been receiving calls from individuals who would like to help with garden work days at the land-trusted gardens. From time to time, we have used volunteer groups to help out with special projects at several sites.

If you would like to lend a hand or a rake, just give our office a call and we will try to match you up with volunteer activities at some of the gardens. Just call 215-988-8797 or email us at terrym@ngalandtrust.org.

Donations to support NGA and the garden improvements can be sent to: **Neighborhood Gardens Association, 100 North 20th Street, Suite 309 Philadelphia, PA 19103**

Please include you name and address so we can acknowledge your contribution.

Garden Spotlight: Seedy Acres (continued from Page 2)

other gardens.

Today, the biggest challenge to the Seedy Acres Gardeners is a privately owned section of the garden that is for sale. The gardeners are starting a fundraising drive to purchase the lots. If you want to visit the garden and help with their fundraising efforts, plan to attend the Northern Liberties Garden Tour held in May (date not known at this time).

For more information about the tour, give us a call at 215-988-8797 or email Terry Mushovic, NGA's Executive Director (terrym@ngalandtrust.org).

Pictures and more information about Seedy Acres, as well as the other NGA land-trusted gardens can be found on our website:

www.ngalandtrust.org

The Garden Spotlight reflects on the history of different NGA land-trusted gardens. In early issues of Well Preserved, this column was called "A Garden Preserve".

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Mrs. Sally McCabe, Garden Coordinator
437 Poplar St.
Philadelphia, PA 19123

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IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

For information on preserving a Philadelphia community garden:
Neighborhood Gardens Association
Terry Mushovic, Executive Director [**e-mail: terrym@ngalandtrust.org**]
Greg Gregson, Preservation Specialist [**e-mail: gregg@ngalandtrust.org**]
215-988-8797 ⟨ web: http://www.ngalandtrust.org

For information on how to start a community garden:
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215-988-8800 ⟨ web: http://www.pennsylvaniahorticulturalsociety.org

For information on food gardening:
Penn State Urban Gardening Program
215-471-2224

Well-Preserved

Updates from

Neighborhood Gardens Association

A Philadelphia Land Trust

Preserving community-managed open space since 1986

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Summer 2002

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OUR MISSION

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NGA STAFF CHANGES

Message from the Director

Over the last three years, Shannon McWeeney has had a major impact on NGA and the way that we do business. She designed and created the NGA web site in December 1999 and continually improved it over the last two years. Last month over 12,000 people visited the site. People here and from all over the USA and world have learned about urban land conservation and saving community gardens by visiting us at www.ngalandtrust.org. Shannon also created databases for Greg and me so that we can more efficiently track the land-trusted gardens and contacts we make over the phone. She's helped me write and lay out this *Well Preserved* newsletter and prepare it for the printers.

In early June, Shannon, her husband, and two dogs relocated to the West Coast. Shannon will be starting a university teaching position in biostatistics there, after completing her post-doctorate work at the University of Pennsylvania. We will miss her as a person, as well as professionally. We are so pleased that she has found a great new home and wish her all the best.

Since it is hard to fill someone else's shoes, we decided to create a whole new position at NGA. Margot Berg is our new Associate Director. She and her family live in Center City and she has previously worked in the field of public art, coordinating the City's conservation and collection management program. She sees community gardens and green spaces as important to the livability of urban neighborhoods.

Margot will be working with me to manage grants and search for more opportunities to help our current land-trust gardens and preserve new gardens for the benefit of the neighborhoods. As the Neighborhood Transformation Initiative continues to gain momentum, new groups are expressing interest in permanently preserving community-managed gardens in their areas.

Terry

GARDEN SPOTLIGHT: WARRINGTON

Warrington Garden: From Factory to Urban Farm

Until the 1970s, the northside of the 4700 block of Warrington Avenue in West Philadelphia was home to a large factory building. When it burned down due to an electrical fire, the neighborhood was left with a vacant lot that began filling up with trash and debris. After the demolition of the old factory, several students began clearing the lot in 1973. They joined forces with Bill Whitaker and a handful of other gardeners the next year to create the beginnings of the Warrington Community Garden.

Warrington Garden grows food and friendship on almost an acre of ground.

For the first several years, Bill and the other gardeners began gardening the back of the large lot using the natural protection of the weedy front of the lot to keep vandals at bay. The garden continued to grow until some time in the late seventies or early eighties when a major reorganization occurred. At this point, a group of Hmong refugees organized by the catholic church helped the garden by thoroughly cleaning the lot and creating the layout of the plots and paths that are used at the garden today.

Almost thirty years later, several of these original gardeners are still tending their vegetable plots alongside more than 60 families. Now the garden is home to community gardeners of all ages and cultural backgrounds who grow food for their families and goodwill with their neighbors. Their annual fall harvest potluck dinner is a sampling of cuisines from around the world using many of the same ingredients with special spices to add the finishing touch.

Garden Profile:
Vegetable and flower garden
Year Started:
1973
GARDEN SIZE:
60+ families
YEAR PRESERVED:
1992
NGA TRIVIA:
Garden still has a free-standing wall from the original factory

Ten years ago, NGA, working with the gardeners,was able to purchase this 3/4 acre garden from the former factory owner. In 1992 Claire Power, gardeners, and NGA board members put together a creative deal and convinced the owner to reduce his original price. Gardeners raised $15,000 by the sale date and NGA "loaned" the gardeners the other $20,000. Gardeners agreed to continue fundraising and repay the NGA Acquisition Fund so other groups could do the same in the future. Their Annual Porch Sales in September raised some of the money and involved dozens of local families as well as the gardeners each year. By 1999 the gardeners had replenished the NGA Acquisition Fund and continued to dream of even more ways to make their garden an attractive and *permanent* part of the community.

The first major improvement project was relandscaping the street side of the garden. Grants were secured to help pay for the new metal fence and ornamental plants. With help from the University of Pennsylvania, the garden received lampposts to light the *(continues on page 3)*

GARDEN UPDATES

Three More Gardens Get Water

In April, NGA installed water services at three more of the land-trusted gardens. The Concert Garden in Point Breeze, the Southwark/Queen Village Garden in South Philadelphia, and Stillman Gardens at Stillman and Parrish Streets in Fairmount can all be watered judiciously by the gardeners thanks to funds from the McLean contributionship, OHCD, and individual donors like you.

Access to water is critical, and now these gardens no longer have to rely on fire hydrants or neighbors for a water source. This brings the total to 10 gardens out of 24 that have water services.

Pavilion & Lights for Glenwood Green Acres

Thanks to PHS and OHCD funds, Glenwood Green Acres gardeners have a new pavilion where gardeners can take a break from the sun or rain while tending one of the 80 vegetable plots there.

This summer the gardeners will also have lights along the back of the garden to help with security and provide light for evening meetings. PECO Energy Company and PHS donated the funds necessary for the electricity at this award-winning garden.

More Help Needed

Donations to support NGA and the Garden Improvements Fund can be sent to: **Neighborhood Gardens Association, 100 North 20th Street, Suite 309 Philadelphia, PA 19103**

Please include your name and address so we can acknowledge your contribution.

Each dollar you donate will be matched and will double our efforts to make NGA gardens greener and better.

Garden Spotlight: Warrington Garden (continued from Page 2)

street in the evening. Last summer the garden had a direct water connection installed and an underground system of pipes that distributes the water to spigots located conveniently throughout the garden. Their latest wishlist items are a large weatherproof bulletin board and a composting toilet. It is only a matter of time until they make these projects a reality, too.

The Warrington Garden was selected as a PHS Keystone Garden in 2000. This makes it one of a dozen special community gardening sites in the city. It is a frequent winner in the PHS City Gardens Contest and the site of outdoor workshops and tours. NGA featured the garden on its first Trolley Tour in 2000.

Pictures and more information about Warrington Garden as well as other NGA land-trusted gardens can be found on our website:

www.ngalandtrust.org

The Garden Spotlight reflects on the history of different NGA land-trusted gardens. In early issues of Well Preserved, this column was called "A Garden Preserve".

Latest news from Seedy Acres

The Spring 2002 *Garden Spotlight* featured Seedy Acres in Northern Liberties. Since then, the gardeners have started to fundraise to purchase more parcels of the garden. You can help them buy more of their garden and have some fun at the same time by attending the **Seedy Acres Garden Fundraiser - Sunday, June 30th** from 5-8pm. The gardeners will host a garden party with music and food. Profits from the party will go to the Seedy Acres Acquisition Fund. For information and directions, please contact Susan White at 215-574-4993 or Suewhitbee@aol.com.

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[**e-mail: terrym@ngalandtrust.org**]
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web: http://www.ngalandtrust.org

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EVENTS CALENDAR

Medicinal Plants in Your Neighborhood
Saturday, June 22 10:00am-12:00pm

Take a guided walk around Northern Liberties and discover the much overlooked healing plants that grow there. Return to Seedy Acres Community Garden to learn the healing properties of cultivated and uncultivated herbs and plants growing in the garden. You will also learn how to make herbal vinegars and prepare an herbal tincture and infusion. The $25.00 registration fee is a donation to the Seedy Acres Garden Acquisition Fund.

Registration is limited to first come first serve. For information and directions, please contact Susan White at 215-574-4993 or Suewhitbee@aol.com.

Well-Preserved

Updates from
Neighborhood Gardens Association
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In this issue

GARDEN SPOTLIGHT:
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OUR MISSION

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Message from the Director

The summer of 2002 is taking its place in the history books as one of the hottest and driest on record. I'm sure most of us won't soon forget the prayers for rain and the efforts to keep our plants alive through the drought restrictions. Luckily, six land trust gardens have new water systems which allowed them to water their plants judiciously this season. We are hoping to see some award-winning entries in the PHS Harvest Show on the weekend of September 14th and 15th.

Two of the smaller gardens in the land trust are featured in our Garden Spotlight. These little neighborhood gems are both over twenty years old and provide a touch of green and colorful flowers in their communities. At both gardens, the dedicated volunteers who started the gardens are still lovingly caring for them today.

This summer we continued to work with the land trust gardens to plan and implement physical improvements to their sites. Now that most of the sidewalks have been installed and the first group of water systems are complete, we are moving on to fencing and the next group of water systems at several more gardens. More details are on page 3.

On behalf of the gardeners at Seedy Acres and the NGA Board, I'd like to welcome the many new donors who have contributed to the efforts to purchase more of the lots that make up this award-winning garden. The Seedy Acres gardeners had a busy summer raising funds and learning to live with the construction site on a part of their garden. More of this story is on page 3.

I hope this newsletter finds you enjoying some free time in your garden and dreaming about the year to come when it will rain and water will be plentiful.

Terry

GARDEN SPOTLIGHT: Little Gems

As a child, we are told that wonderful gifts can come in small packages. We tend not to believe it at the time, but later learn that it is true. So it is with four of the NGA land-trusted gardens. Each one is on merely a single or double house lot but is filled with many flourishing plants and is cared for by the gardeners who fought to have them preserved. Here are two of NGA's Little Gems.

Stillman Street Garden

The garden at Stillman and Parrish Streets in the Fairmount section of the city is a single house lot where Jane Gourley and her neighbors care for a flower garden each year. The house was demolished in 1971, and after two years of clearing trash off the lot, the neighbors decided to start a garden there for the community. Jane Gourley, her family, and neighbors built a lovely and beloved little flower garden.

Jane Gourley and Bill O'Donnell bring vibrant color and creative arrangement to Stillman Street.

Each year, the gardeners have planted annual flowers between the perennials and shrubs, creating a panorama of color on this narrow city street. The gardeners have won numerous City Gardens Contest awards and continually make changes to their flower design to peak their interest and that of the neighborhood. Comments from neighbors are encouraged, as are contributions to fund the garden care. A donation can at the corner store collects over two hundred dollars per year for garden materials, and the Fairmount Civic Association also contributes money annually. NGA and the gardeners purchased the lot from the owner in 1994 for $8,000. NGA holds a Garden Agreement with Stillman, in which the gardeners have agreed to pay back half of the purchase cost over several years.

So, the next time you are in the Fairmount neighborhood, check out the corner of Stillman and Parrish Streets. There you'll find the colorful little corner lot being lovingly tended by Jane Gourley, Bill O'Donnell, and their neighbors. This spring, NGA rewarded their many years of hard work by installing a water system. Now they don't have to rely on neighbors' spigots to water the garden.

Kauffman Green

In 1992, NGA, the gardeners, and local neighbors successfully purchased this small corner lot in Queen Village from the Philadelphia Housing Development Corporation. Surrounded by old and new rowhouses, this site of a former rowhouse became a hard fought-for "neighborhood green". Since 1976, Elizabeth and Bill McCardell and their neighbors have planted spring bulbs, flowers, and several trees creating a welcoming gateway to the neighborhood at Passyunk Avenue and Kauffman Street.

Springtime is the most colorful time of the year at Kauffman Green, as tulips, daffodils, and other spring bulbs flourish under the mature trees as if to welcome the gardening season. Throughout the year, it adds a touch of green to this densely built and bustling neighborhood. The community greeners have won ribbons several different years at the annual PHS Harvest Show. Although Kauffman Green is one of the smallest gems in the land trust, it is lovingly tended and cherished by the gardeners and neighbors of this diverse South Philadelphia neighborhood.

GARDEN UPDATES

Glenwood Green Acres - A Shining Success

As the days are becoming shorter, Glenwood gardeners can now garden into the evening hours, thanks to their new lighting. This summer, with support from PECO and PHS, the gardeners and NGA installed six light poles along the railroad side of the garden. The lights provide security for this 3.67 acre vegetable garden in North Philadelphia and allow the 80 gardeners to extend their gardening day. This improvement, and the pavillion constructed there in the spring, refect NGA's efforts to make physical improvements to land trust gardens making them sustainable into the future.

To celebrate their improvements, the Glenwood gardeners invite all their friends and donors to join them for a garden party of fun, food, and music on Saturday, October 5th. For information on directions and tickets to the event, call NGA at (215) 988-8797.

Pictures and more information about these gardens as well as other NGA land-trusted gardens can be found on our website:

www.ngalandtrust.org

OHCD Year 28 Funding Helps NGA Gardeners

NGA has received a $25,000 matching grant from the Office of Housing and Urban Development as part of OHCD Year 28 funding. These federal funds require a one-to-one match and were matched this year by the McLean Contributionship, PHS, and individual donors like you. In this second round of improvements, NGA will provide water systems, fencing, and streetscape improvements to several land trust gardens. The NGA Board seeks to acquire new gardens for inclusion in the land trust, but is also committed to helping those gardens already in the trust to remain strong and viable green spaces in their communities.

Seedy Acres Fundraising Off to a Good Start

In recent issues of the newsletter, you have read about this Northern Liberties garden and the need to purchase more of its lots (NGA owns five of the thirteen lots to date). The urgency of this need became clear this summer when the owner of one of the lots, surrounded on two sides by the garden, sold to a developer for construction of a single family house. The gardeners have been coping with moving their plants, bees, and hopes to other parts of the garden.

Seedy Acres - continued

Northern Liberties is an active development area, and the community is committed to preserving this established neighborhood treasure for the next generation of gardeners. A festive Garden Fundraiser was held in June, which raised about $4,000, bringing Seedy Acres closer to its goal of buying more of the garden lots.

NGA Welcomes New Board Members

In June, two new members were elected to NGA's Board: Debra McCarty and Linda Dottor. **Debra McCarty** has a degree in Environmental Science and is the Chief of Wastewater Treatment for the Philadelphia Water Department. She is an avid home gardener and is supportive of preserving the community garden in her city neighborhood. **Linda Dottor**, AICP, worked for the Philadelphia City Planning Commission for ten years, and is now the Program Manager for the Community Design Collaborative, providing pro bono design services to nonprofits. The NGA Board of Directors is pleased to have Debra and Linda join the eleven member board.

More Help Needed

Donations to support NGA and the Garden Improvement Fund can be sent to: **Neighborhood Gardens Association, 100 North 20th Street, Suite 309 Philadelphia, PA 19103**

Each dollar you donate will be matched and will double our efforts to make NGA gardens greener and stronger.

NEIGHBORHOOD GARDENS ASSOCIATION
A Philadelphia Land Trust
100 N. 20th Street, Suite 309
Philadelphia, PA 19103-1443

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IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

For information on preserving a Philadelphia community garden:
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Terry Mushovic, Executive Director
e-mail: terrym@ngalandtrust.org
Greg Gregson, Preservation Specialist
e-mail: gregg@ngalandtrust.org
(215) 988-8797
web: www.ngalandtrust.org

For information on how to start a community garden:
The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society's Philadelphia Green Program
(215) 988-8800
www.pennsylvaniahorticulturalsociety.org

For information on food gardening:
Penn State Urban Gardening Program
(215) 471-2224

EVENTS CALENDAR

Garden Party at **Warrington Community Garden**, 4700 block of Warrington Avenue on Saturday, October 5th (raindate October 6th). Stroll through the garden from 9am to 5pm and purchase herbs, flowers, and delicious barbeque cooked right at the garden. Neighbors will also be holding their Annual Porch Sale to benefit the garden. So plan to spend the day in this West Philadelphia community.

Glenwood Green Acres Garden Party to celebrate their improvements at 18th and Glenwood Avenue on Saturday, October 5th. Check out their new lights and garden pavillion. For information on directions and tickets to the event, call NGA at (215) 988-8797.

Well-Preserved

Updates from

Neighborhood Gardens Association

A Philadelphia Land Trust

Preserving community-managed open space since 1986

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The Neighborhood Gardens Association / A Philadelphia Land Trust (NGA) is a private, non-profit corporation that was founded in 1986. The mission of the land trust is to ensure the continuity and long-term preservation of community-managed gardens and open space in low and moderate-income neighborhoods.

Happy New Year to All of Our Gardeners, Donors, and Supporters

As the land trust gardens begin their long winter's rest, NGA staff thought that this might be a good time to reflect on the past year and to revisit the the mission and the activities of the Neighborhood Gardens Association as established sixteen years ago.

There are currently twenty-two gardens in the land trust, ranging in size from one house lot to 3+ acres, in neighborhoods throughout the city. Gardeners are individuals and families, elderly and children; they are from all races and ethnicities. This past year, we cherished our gardens and green spaces more than ever for the peace and tranquility that they afford.

As part of NGA's Garden Improvement Project, improvements requested by the gardeners were made at three land trust gardens this year. The Southwark Queen Village Garden received a new water system; the Tulip Street Garden received a new picket fence to replace the old chain link; and Glenwood Green Acres received a picnic pavilion and new lights to illuminate the garden in the evening hours. More improvement projects are planned, and fundraising efforts are underway. At Seedy Acres, thanks to the gardeners' hard work and dedication, two additional lots have been purchased for the land trust, meaning that all but a small portion of the garden has been preserved. Successes like Seedy Acres bring positive and tangible renewal to older urban areas fighting to retain a balance of amenities as new development occurs.

The Neighborhood Gardens Association continues to work with community groups to ensure that community-managed gardens and open space are preserved for neighborhood residents in perpetuity. Gardeners are the ongoing stewards of the gardens: handling all of the gardening, garden management, maintenance, and any minor improvements. NGA's role, once a garden is in the land trust, is to provide management assistance, major improvements to increase their sustainability, and to hold title to the land so that the gardeners do not have to assume the taxes and liability.

Looking ahead to 2003, NGA's Board and staff remain committed to preserving community-managed gardens and open space in Philadelphia's neighborhoods. We look forward to another year of changes at the gardens, the challenging ongoing work of garden aquisitions and improvements, bountiful harvests, and the pleasure of visiting these green urban oases.

Margot Berg
Associate Director

GARDEN SPOTLIGHT: Tulip Street

In the last issue, we told you about NGA's Little Gems - small gardens that have a large impact. Another of NGA's Little Gems, the Tulip Street Garden, flourishes in the Kensington neighborhood.

In 1995, neighbors tackled a corner lot at Cumberland and Tulip Streets in New Kensington that was covered with six-foot weeds, old tires, diapers, and graffiti. The two-house lot had been vacant for over twenty years until one neighbor, Joe Caltagirone, started clearing the lot with some help from his neighbors. After the lot was cleared, Joe Cal, as he likes to be called, and others collected money from the neighbors to buy the materials for a chain link fence. They installed the fence themselves and their first event on the new garden lot was a birthday party for a local child complete with pony rides.

Since Joe Cal and his neighbors didn't know much about how to grow flowers, Joe headed to the local library and started reading gardening books. "City people don't know much about plants because they live in a concrete jungle," said Joe as he told the history of the garden, "I learned most of what I know by taking advantage of the library and teaching myself." This flower garden is a burst of color - from the vibrant bulbs of spring, including their namesake tulips, to the last roses of the fall. Each year, Joe and the neighbors redesign the garden and add more plants - some that are started from seed in Joe's home.

In 1998, NGA purchased one of the lots from HUD, and in 2000 the City donated the second lot to NGA and the neighbors as a permanent green space for the community. In 2002, NGA paid for sidewalk repairs as well as the new white picket fence - Joe's dream! - to replace the old chain link.

Joe has received a lot of help with Tulip Street: Amy Kimball of the New Kensington CDC and Mary Corboy of Greensgrow, the urban farm on Cumberland and Almond Streets, among others. The PHS Philadelphia Green Program has delivered mulch several years in a row to help the gardeners battle the weeds and keep the moisture in the beds, and NGA's Greg Gregson has helped to pull weeds and paint the new fence. The adjacent neighbor, Lena Yardley, generously provides water from her house to keep all of the beautiful blooms alive.

Joe Cal and his helper, Lily Thida, at the garden.

Garden Profile:
Flower garden
Year Started:
1995
GARDEN SIZE:
2 house lots
YEARS PRESERVED:
1998, 2000

Now that the new fence is up, Joe Cal and his neighbors are looking forward to a great 2003 gardening season. However, additional gardeners are needed to help with the Tulip Street garden. No experience is necessary - Joe can teach you as you go. If you are interested in lending a hand with this land trust garden, call NGA at (215) 988-8797, and we will put you in touch with Joe and the Tulip Street gardeners.

GARDEN UPDATES

Seedy Acres Acquisition

We are happy to report that two more lots of this award-winning garden in the Northern Liberties neighborhood were acquired from private owners and are now land trusted in perpetuity. NGA has purchased the properties, at 910 and 914 North Leithgow Street, and the gardeners have raised a total of $22,000 toward the acquisition costs. They are hoping to raise the remainder of the funds by the early spring. NGA acquisition money is a revolving fund, and repayment by land trust gardeners allows additional gardens to be purchased for the land trust in the future. Thanks to all the neighbors and others who have made a donation to help preserve Seedy Acres for the Northern Liberties neighborhood. If you would like to donate to the Seedy Acres Fund, please call NGA or use the form at the right and indicate Seedy Acres on your check. Congratulations, Seedy Acres gardeners!

NGA Receives Grant from Lincoln Financial

NGA has received a $5,000 grant from the Lincoln Financial Group Foundation in support of our Garden Improvement Project. The funding will be used for improvements requested by gardeners at older, land trust gardens, including the installation of water systems and other high priority needs. Lincoln Financial's contribution will be matched by a grant which NGA received from the Office of Housing and Community Development allocated specifically for the garden improvements. Upgrading these gardens is a key strategy for ensuring the gardens' long-term existence. NGA thanks the Board and staff of Lincoln Financial Group Foundation for their generous contribution toward the preservation of neighborhood gardens, and for joining our circle of friends.

Glenwood Barbeque

On Saturday, October 5th, the gardeners and friends of Glenwood Green Acres held a barbeque to celebrate their new pavilion and lights. On what turned out to be a hot Indian Summer day, family and friends of the garden got together to feast on the homemade treats, enjoy each other's company, and to thank the funders and supporters of the improvements - PECO, OHCD, PHS, Councilman Daryl Clark, and NGA. This North Philadelphia garden was a feast for the eyes, as hip-high ocra and deep red beets flourished next to bursts of pink cosmos and yellow marigolds, providing a picturesque celebration setting.

Pictures and information about the land trust gardens as well as urban land trusts in other cities, can be found on our website:

www.ngalandtrust.org

Help Support NGA

NGA is a nonprofit urban land trust preserving community-managed gardens and open space in Philadelphia's neighborhoods.

You can help support our efforts to acquire and improve gardens and to provide assistance and support to gardeners throughout Philadelphia.
A green city is a great city!

Your contribution is tax deductible. NGA and the gardeners thank you!

___$25___$50___$100___Other

Name_____
(___I prefer to remain anonymous)

Address_____

City_____State___Zip_____

Please make checks payable to The Neighborhood Gardens Association and mail to:
100 North 20th Street, Suite 309
Philadelphia, PA 19103

If you would like to use a credit card, go to **www.ngalandtrust.org** and click on the link to Network for Good.

If you would like to donate through the United Way, our code number is: **8206**.
Thank you!

The staff of NGA wishes you a peaceful and Happy New Year!

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Philadelphia, PA 19103-1443

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(215) 988-8797
Greg Gregson, Preservation Specialist
e-mail: gregg@ngalandtrust.org
(215) 988-8799

web: www.ngalandtrust.org

For information on food gardening:
Penn State Urban Gardening Program
(215) 471-2224

EVENTS CALENDAR

Philadelphia Green Winter Skills Conference will be held on Saturday, January 25th, at the Friends Meeting House at 4th and Arch Streets. The Skills Conference is an annual event aimed at gardeners and community leaders interested in honing their gardening and garden management skills. NGA has helped organize the conference, and this year's topics include: resource development - both people and money, event planning, and proposal writing made easy. The registration fee for the conference is $5. Please call NGA at (215) 988-8797 for information and to register.

Well-Preserved

Updates from

Neighborhood Gardens Association

A Philadelphia Land Trust

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A GREEN CITY IS A GREAT CITY!

The winter of 2002 will be remembered as one of the most severe in years. Between the record snowfalls and frigid temperatures, all of us are more eager than we've ever been to see those signs of spring arrive: the brave buds on the trees, the spring bulbs poking through the ground, and the sound of birds singing in the morning.

The staff and board of NGA are looking forward to another busy spring and summer at the gardens this year. Installation of water, irrigation systems,and fencing to seven NGA gardens will help them to continue to flourish for years to come. We are especially excited about our summer event: in June, NGA will launch Philadelphia's first annual ***Green City Month*** (see page 2 for details of the event) celebrating the land trust gardens and raising awareness about the importance of urban green space. This event will showcase NGA's land trust gardens and other important sites, and will celebrate all of the gardeners whose hard work and dedication are improving Philadelphia's neighborhoods. Community garden and green space preservation for the purpose of neighborhood renewal and improving the quality of life is more important than ever. We hope you'll join us in June!

Best of luck to everyone this gardening season. We at NGA wish you a successful and enjoyable year.

NGA SPOTLIGHT: *GREEN CITY MONTH*

This month's Spotlight focuses on NGA's first-ever Green City Month *to be held at land trust gardens throughout Philadelphia in June.*

NGA has been busily planning the first of what we hope will be an annual event in June: the first-ever *Green City Month*. In cooperation with the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society and the Penn State Urban Gardening Program, NGA is planning a series of workshops, tours, garden parties, and related land trust garden events highlighting Philadelphia's community gardens and green spaces which have done so much to improve Philadelphia's neighborhoods. The purpose of the event is to celebrate the twenty-four land-trusted community gardens and the neighborhood people who have worked so hard to create them and to keep them going year after year. In addition, *Green City Month* is intended to raise awareness about the strong impact that community green spaces have on the quality of life in urban neighborhoods. All of the world's greatest and most liveable cities have extensive green space systems, including parks and gardens at the neighborhood level. Many Philadelphians have never been in a community garden, and we want to provide them with an opportunity to experience first-hand the impact of community green space on urban neighborhoods. Events will include special gardening-related workshops, a Mural Arts and gardens trolley tour in Norris Square, land trust garden celebrations and fundraisers, a Summer Solstice trolley tour, and more. Please join NGA and other green city enthusiasts at one or all of these outdoor events in June.

For a complete and up-to-the minute listing of *Green City Month* activities, please check the NGA website at ngalandtrust.org or call (215) 988-8797. A green city is a great city!

Pictures and information about all of the land trust gardens as well as urban land trusts in other cities, can be found on our website:

www.ngalandtrust.org

GARDEN UPDATES

Garden Improvements

NGA is gearing up for this year's round of garden improvements. Last year, four NGA gardens received new sidewalks, eight gardens received direct water connections, and two gardens received street trees and fences. Garden improvements are one of the best ways to increase the longevity of a garden, to attract new gardeners and supporters, and therefore to ensure their long-term preservation. NGA received a second year of OHCD community block grant funds from the City's Office of Housing and Community Development, which will be matched by foundations and individuals to fund improvements at seven NGA gardens this summer.

Three gardens - Southwark/ Queen Village, Glenwood Green Acres, and 22nd and Ellsworth - will receive direct water access. Through an agreement with the Philadelphia Water Department, these community gardeners will pay water-use-only rates, plus get a 25% charitable discount on the water they use. Two other gardens, Squirrel Hill and Seedy Acres, will get irrigation lines run through their gardens connecting to the water access equipment installed last year. A water source is essential to the success of community gardens, and the NGA gardeners are judicious in their water usage.

Two gardens will receive new fencing: Rainbow Park youth garden in New Kensington and Church Lane Garden in Germantown. These twenty-year-old treasures will finally get a much-needed facelift. A white picket fence will frame the youth garden and a new metal fence will show off the Church Lane Garden. NGA gardens are green treasures in their neighborhoods and these improvements are being made to ensure their sustainability and permanence.

Recent Grants Received

We are pleased to report that in recent months NGA has received grants from the Dolfinger-McMahon Foundation, the McLean Contributionship, the Connelly Foundation, the Land Trust Alliance, and the Samuel S. Fels Fund. The board and staff of NGA extend their sincerest thanks to these funders for their generous contributions, as well as to all of the individual donors who have supported us this year. We hope you will continue to support us in our ongoing efforts to preserve community-managed gardens in perpetuity for the purpose of neighborhood renewal and improving the quality of life in Philadelphia.

Winter Skills Conference

NGA co-sponsored this year's Philadelphia Green Winter Skills Conference held on January 25th at the Arch Street Friends Meeting House on 4th and Arch Streets. This year's focus was "Asset Based Community Development" - the idea that community building starts with the process of locating the assets, skills, and capacities of residents, associations, and local institutions. The conference was a big success, over 125 block captains, gardeners, tree tenders, and others attended. Participants left with a renewed enthusiasm and determination for the important task of rebuilding Philadelphia's great neighborhoods.

Help Support NGA

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A green city is a great city!

___$25___$50___$100___Other

Name_____

Address_____

City_____State___Zip___

__I prefer to remain anonymous.

__I am interested in making a planned gift. Please contact me.

Please make checks payable to the Neighborhood Gardens Association and mail to:
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Philadelphia, PA 19103

If you would like to use a credit card, go to **www.ngalandtrust.org** and click on the link to Network for Good.

NGA's United Way code number is: 8206.

Thank you for your support!

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(215) 988-8797
Greg Gregson, Preservation Specialist
e-mail: gregg@ngalandtrust.org
(215) 988-8799

web: www.ngalandtrust.org

For information on food gardening:
Penn State Urban Gardening Program
(215) 471-2224

EVENTS CALENDAR

Join us for the ***Green City Month* Summer Solstice Trolley Tour** of NGA land trust gardens on Saturday, June 21st from 10am to 1pm, departing from the Horticulture Center in West Fairmount Park, near Montgomery and Belmont Avenues. This three-hour tour will include stops at several of Philadelphia's unique community gardens. Tickets are $15. Parking is available at the Center. Please email or call NGA at (215) 988-8797 for reservations.

Southwark/Queen Village Garden, on Christian Street between 3rd and 4th, is hosting a **plant sale and tag sale** on Saturday, May 3rd from 10am to 2pm. All sales benefit the garden, so plan to buy some plants or find a recycled treasure.

Well-Preserved

Updates from

Neighborhood Gardens Association

A Philadelphia Land Trust

Preserving community-managed open space since 1986

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After many long weeks of seemingly endless rain and tall weeds, Summer 2003 is finally here. NGA welcomed the season with the first annual *Green City Month* in June. The event was a big success and our thanks go out to all who participated. Workshops, garden parties, a Summer Solstice Trolley Tour, and a Whole Foods 5% Day were well attended by donors, gardeners, and others. Many trolley tour participants had never been inside a community garden and were treated to a visit to Glenwood Green Acres, the Southwark/ Queen Village garden, and others (see page 3). The gardeners' hard work was evident and inspiring to all. *Green City Month* was successful in raising awareness about NGA, the land trust gardens, and the benefits of neighborhood green space. In addition, 2003's garden improvements are nearing completion at six gardens (see page 3). These critical investments in the land trust gardens help ensure that they will continue to be assets in the neighborhoods for years to come.

Celebrating the Summer Solstice at Southwark/Queen Village

During the long, hot days ahead of us, we hope you will enjoy gardening, socializing, or just relaxing in *your* well-preserved oasis.

Squirrel Hill Community Garden

NGA SPOTLIGHT: *Bodine Street Garden*

This month's Spotlight focuses on the Bodine Street Garden in South Philadelphia, which will soon join the NGA land trust.

In 1980, Michael Legacki and his neighbors cleared two lots in their Queen Village community that had become trash-filled and problematic. With help from the PHS Philadelphia Green Program, they grew vegetables and flowers and enjoyed the sitting areas they created. As the years passed, new neighbors became involved in the garden and added their own touches. One such improvement is an extensive system of barrels that collect rain water off of an adjacent roof, providing most of the water needed for the garden.

In May of 2000, mosaic tile artist Isaiah Zagar created a beautiful mural, *The Garden Goddesses*, on one of the garden's walls. The mural has become an attraction for neighborhood residents, many bringing visitors here as part of their Queen Village tour.

Last year gardeners initiated a trap-spay-release program to help curb the area's feral cat overpopulation problem. They intend to continue using the garden for other neighborhood improvement activities.

Early this year, the land on which this beloved garden sits was put on the market. The Bodine Street Community Gardeners had approached NGA about preserving the garden last year. The owner of the lots is tax delinquent, owing the City money for these two properties. Michael Legacki, as the original gardener, applied to the City to acquire the properties through the Small Vacant Lot Abatement Program. Passionate about saving their garden, the community gardeners found a champion in their Councilman, Frank DiCicco. He agreed to introduce a bill in City Council that would allow the Redevelopment Authority to take the two lots and donate them to the Bodine Street Community Gardeners and NGA. This bill passed on June 12th, 2003 and the process is now moving forward. The donation is expected be completed by September.

Councilman DiCicco wrote the following to the Bodine Street Community Gardeners: *"I have always supported development in the First Council District because, among other things, it helps revitalize a neighborhood by bringing new residents to our city. But development is not always about building new homes and growing our depleting population base. Sometimes development is simply protecting a neighborhood and supporting its existing residents who want to protect the land and the community in which they live."*

NGA applauds Councilman DiCicco's support of the gardeners and the green oasis they have created and lovingly maintain for the benefit of their neighborhood. For more information about the garden, you can check out their website at www.savethegarden.com.

GARDEN UPDATES

Garden Improvements

This summer, six NGA gardens are receiving much-needed physical improvements. Garden improvements are one of the best ways to increase the longevity of a garden, to attract new gardeners and supporters, and therefore to ensure their long-term preservation. Thanks to OHCD community block grant funds from the City's Office of Housing and Community Development, which is matched by foundations and individuals, the following are underway: new water connections at Glenwood and Southwark/Queen Village; new iron fencing at SW/QV and Church Lane; wooden fencing at Rainbow Park; and irrigation lines at Squirrel Hill and Seedy Acres.

First *Green City Month*

Green City Month was held in June in cooperation with the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society and the Penn State Urban Gardening Program. A Whole Foods Market 5% Day on June 4th was a great success, in spite of the persistent rain, with 5% of the day's sales going to NGA for garden preservation. Next, a fundraiser barbecue at Seedy Acres in Northern Liberties raised money for their acquisition fund with a silent auction of artist-made birdhouses and the gardeners now-famous vodka snowcones. In addition to other workshops and celebrations, a Summer Solstice Trolley Tour on June 21st took participants to Glenwood Green Acres, Warrington, Aspen Farms, and Southwark/ Queen Village, where they enjoyed delicious refreshments. The gardeners were celebrating the Solstice in their hand-made costumes.

Arranging flowers for the Southwark/Queen Village event

NGA and the gardeners thank all of our supporters and donors during *Green City Month* 2003, including the following: PHS and PSUGP, Land Trust Alliance Mid Atlantic Region, the Allstate Foundation, Claneil Foundation, Whole Foods Market, the Pepsi Bottling Group, Acme Market, Super Fresh Market, Iovine Brothers Produce, Sun & Earth, Inc., Caviar Assouline, and the Pennsylvania General Store. We plan to make this an annual event to continue to raise awareness about and build support for the preservation of the community gardens and neighborhood green spaces that help make Philadelphia one of the most livable cities in the U.S. We hope you'll join us next year.

Help Support NGA

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A green city is a great city!

___$25___$50___$100___Other

Name_____

Address_____

City_____State___Zip___

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NGA's United Way code number is: **8206.**

Thank you for your support!

Photos and information about all of the land trust gardens as well as urban land trusts in other cities, can be found on our website:

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e-mail: gregg@ngalandtrust.org
(215) 988-8799

web: www.ngalandtrust.org

For information on food gardening:
Penn State Urban Gardening Program
(215) 471-2224

EVENTS CALENDAR

Philadelphia Green's City Gardening Series plans gardening workshops at locations throughout the city in July and August: container gardening, creating birdbaths, flower arranging, and more. Also, on August 14th, a bus trip to Chanticleer. Call Marilyn Reynolds at 215-988-8872 for details.

The **First Annual Community Gardens Harvest Show** will be held on Saturday September 20th at the **Southwark/Queen Village Garden**, on Christian Street between 3rd and 4th. This land trust garden is hosting competitive classes and an end-of-the-season party for community gardeners. Check NGA's web site for future details.

Well-Preserved

Updates from
Neighborhood Gardens Association
A Philadelphia Land Trust

Preserving community-managed open space since 1986

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The Neighborhood Gardens Association / A Philadelphia Land Trust (NGA) is a private non-profit corporation founded in 1986. The mission of the land trust is to ensure the continuity and long-term preservation of community-managed gardens and open space in low and moderate-income neighborhoods.

Message from the Executive Director

In 2004, NGA looks forward to working with our old and new partners in preserving community-managed gardens and green spaces. We have been working to diversify the funding base of the organization for several years in order to fund garden improvement projects and assist new garden preservation groups. NGA has received an eighteen-month grant from the William Penn Foundation to fund our new initiatives in urban green space preservation. Neighborhood open space planning has become increasingly important in many neighborhoods where there is a large inventory of vacant land. NGA is now working with several neighborhood groups to undertake their planning and preservation. NGA is also working to map community-owned green spaces and is working to build a coalition of groups involved with preserving green spaces in Philadelphia, so that information can be shared and efforts can be coordinated.

NGA has long felt that there is a need for a collaborative of urban land trusts around the country. At a national Land Trust Alliance Conference held in Sacramento in October 2003, we moderated a working session on this issue with other urban land trust professionals and discovered a common set of needs and concerns. Since then, we have established a network, set goals for the group, and are working to create a strong coalition of urban land trusts to share information, work together for solutions to common problems, and advocate for urban green space preservation across the country.

Four new members have joined the NGA Board of Directors in the last year and a half, replacing members whose terms had expired. Linda Dottor is the Program Manager for the Community Design Collaborative, which provides pro-bono services to nonprofits in the Philadelphia area. Debra McCarty is the Chief of Wastewater Treatment for the Philadelphia Water Department. Gayle Samuels is a lecturer in the Environmental Studies Program at the University of Pennsylvania. Nina Segré is chair of the Real Estate Section of the law firm of Montgomery, McCracken, Walker & Rhoads. These four are proving to be valuable new assets for NGA and the land trust gardens.

Terry

NGA SPOTLIGHT: New Fences

This month's Spotlight focuses on fencing improvements made at Southwark/Queen Village, Church Lane, and Bel Arbor Community Gardens during the summer and fall of 2003.

Three land trust gardens received much-needed new fencing last summer. Funding for the improvements was provided by the City of Philadelphia Office of Housing and Community Development, the Lincoln Financial Group Foundation, and The Connelly Foundation. The Southwark/Queen Village Community Garden at 3rd and Christian Streets received a new steel picket fence to replace the old wooden one that was rotting and failing. The new fence improves the garden's visual relationship with the rest of the block, making it an even stronger neighborhood asset than before. At their fall pot luck get-together, gardeners celebrated their new look and bid goodbye to the 2003 gardening season.

Southwark/Queen Village

The Bel Arbor Community Garden at 10th and Kimball Streets in the Bella Vista neighborhood had an old cyclone fence with an ornate wrought iron entrance gate that the gardeners salvaged from the trash. A beautiful combination of garden plots, fruit trees, and sitting areas, Bel Arbor serves as a site for PHS workshops and events, and is gardened by Bella Vista families, including many Asian immigrants from the surrounding Italian Market and Washington Avenue areas. A new iron picket fence was installed, appropriately complementing the recent improvements made to Bardascino Park at the end of the block.

Church Lane

The Church Lane Garden in Germantown still had its original turkey wire fence that was installed when the garden was created in 1978. Due to the large size of the garden, black cyclone was chosen for three of its sides and an ornamental steel picket fence was installed along the Church Lane side. The new fence is an attractive addition to the existing low stone wall that was built in 2002 with a group of volunteer high school students from the Germantown Friends School. One of the larger gardens in the land trust, Church Lane is a beloved haven of color and bounty nestled between residential, railroad, and commercial uses in this bustling neighborhood.

Bel Arbor

GARDEN UPDATES

Fitzwater 2000 Garden

In SOSNA, the southwest center city neighborhood, a garden grows at 2042 and 2044 Fitzwater Street. Since 1995, this two-lot garden has thrived through the hard work and dedication of volunteers, all of whom reside on the block. PHS's Philadelphia Green Program provided early financial support and gardening expertise as the garden got off the ground. A winner of many City Gardens Contest awards over the years, the Fitzwater 2000 Community Garden represents the careful planning, management, and passion of the gardeners. The plan for the garden was designed by a landscape architect, also a founding gardener, and allows for a combination of uses on the site. As you enter the garden, a sitting area with benches and trees allows for quiet contemplation. A butterfly garden in the center of the site adds wildlife to the garden, through the use of milkweed, buddleia, and mulleins. In season, the individual plots abound with vegetables, herbs, and flowers, and are meticulously maintained. Vines are used extensively for their intrinsic beauty and to conceal the fence from view.

This magnificent garden is now at risk of being lost due to increasing development pressure in the area. With the assistance of NGA, Council President Anna Verna's office and the City's Neighborhood Transformation Initiative, the gardeners are working to permanently preserve this garden for the community. They have raised approximately half of the money needed to purchase the lots, and are looking for help in raising the other half. The goal is for the garden to become a part of the NGA land trust -- ensuring its continuation as a garden in perpetuity. If you'd like to donate to help keep the Fitzwater 2000 Garden in existence, send your donation to NGA and indicate **"Fitzwater 2000"** on your check.

New Funding Partners

NGA has received grants from three new partners in recent months: PNC Bank, Citizens Bank, and the Albert M. Greenfield Foundation. The staff, Board, and land trust gardeners are grateful for these, as well as the other corporations, foundations, and individual contributors, that provide the support necessary for our work in preserving Philadelphia's community gardens.

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___$25___$50___$100___Other

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NGA's United Way code number is: **8206**.

Thank you for your support!

Photos and information about all of the land trust gardens as well as urban land trusts in other cities, can be found on our website:

www.ngalandtrust.org

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IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

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(215) 988-8797
Greg Gregson, Preservation Specialist
e-mail: gregg@ngalandtrust.org
(215) 988-8799

web: www.ngalandtrust.org

For information on food gardening:
Penn State Urban Gardening Program
(215) 471-2224

EVENTS CALENDAR

Philadelphia Green's City Gardening Series plans gardening workshops at locations throughout the city. Here are a few topics in February:
February 18th: Kitchen Gardening, "Grow it, Don't Throw It".
February 18th: a lecture entitled "Choosing the Right Tree for the Right Spot".
February 25th: Propagating Your Houseplants
February 28th: African Violets, "The Perfect House Guest".

Call Marilyn Reynolds at 215-988-8872 for details on all events.

Well-Preserved

Updates from

Neighborhood Gardens Association

A Philadelphia Land Trust

Preserving community-managed open space since 1986

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Editor: Margot Berg

Message from the Executive Director

Spring is finally here, and the Board and staff of NGA have much to celebrate. There are approximately twelve gardens that are on their way to becoming preserved for their communities by the NGA land trust in cooperation with the gardeners. We are excited to announce that ownership of Aspen Farms Community Garden, after many years of effort, has finally been transfered to NGA. This stunning garden is now a permanent West Philadelphia landmark, and you can read about the garden in this issue's NGA Spotlight.

NGA is also excited to tell you about our plans for *Open Garden Days* - a new twist on last year's Green City Month including fundraisers, parties, cooking demonstrations, and restaurant events to benefit NGA and the land trust gardens. We hope you'll mark your calendar and join us as we celebrate these beloved neighborhood treasures.

Happy gardening!

Terry

The lily pond at Aspen Farms Community Garden

NGA SPOTLIGHT: *Aspen Farms*

This month's Spotlight focuses on NGA's newest land trust garden: the Aspen Farms Community Garden at 49th and Aspen Streets in West Philadelphia.

After 14 years of hard work, Aspen Farms, a community garden at 49th and Aspen Streets, is the newest land trust garden in Philadelphia. On March 16th, the City transferred title to the land to NGA as a permanent, community-managed garden to benefit the neighborhood. Started in 1975, this West Philadelphia vegetable and flower garden has endured as one of Philadelphia's most successful and celebrated community gardens, and has been featured in the national news media, including Good Morning America and National Geographic. On the former site of demolished row houses and a dry cleaning business in the Mill Creek neighborhood, the garden was started by neighborhood residents with the support of the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, and doubled in size in two years, filling the entire half-acre vacant lot.

Today, Aspen Farms boasts a beautiful assortment of trees, vegetables, flowers, a fish and lily pond, as well as a colorful painted mural of a farm scene. It also serves as an outdoor science classroom for students from two local middle schools. The garden is one of PHS Philadelphia Green's Keystone Gardens, larger long-standing community gardens that are significant in Philadelphia's community gardening past, present, and future. Keystone Gardens have received ongoing assistance from Philadelphia Green, helping to ensure their success and viability.

The success of Aspen Farms is a tribute to its active and dedicated leadership, its well-organized garden club, and the passion of its members. Each member pays an annual fee, and the group holds yearly fundraisers – trips, dinners, and donation appeals – to help support the cost of operating the garden. Hayward Ford, garden coordinator since 1986, has been a tireless leader – working long hours in the garden and serving as an advocate for Aspen Farms and community gardening citywide. Ford's challenge is to connect with younger people in the community and the garden, encouraging them to be the next dedicated leaders of this treasured community landmark. We hope you'll join us in June for a party in the garden to celebrate the preservation of Aspen Farms at long last!

GARDEN UPDATES

Gardens on their Way!

While there are about a dozen gardens in various stages of the acquisition and preservation process, three are in the final steps of being transferred to NGA by the City.

In the beginning stage of this process, NGA staff meets with the gardeners to explore their interest in preserving the garden and to determine their options. If the City owns the lots, NGA and the gardeners can then ask the Vacant Property Review Committee to have the lots transferred to NGA. Once they approve of the transfer, fifteen city agencies have to process the paperwork. About a year later the title is transferred to NGA.

In the meantime, NGA receives an Entry Authorization and has the right to "redevelop" the property according to the agreed use while the paperwork is finalized. In NGA's case, this means having the community gardeners continue gardening. NGA now has entry authorizations for the following gardens:

2751-53 N. Front Street
1934 N. Marshall Street
706 S. 19th Street

Open Garden Days

A series of events at NGA gardens and other locations, *Open Garden Days* will be held throughout spring and summer 2004. The events are planned to celebrate newly land-trusted gardens, to raise money to preserve gardens in need, and to support the ongoing work of NGA. **On May 1st**, the Fitzwater 2000 Garden near 21st and Fitzwater and the Southwark/Queen Village Garden on 3rd and Christian will open to the public and hold flea markets and plant sales on that Saturday. **On June 13th**, enjoy a delicious brunch and support NGA at the same time! On the second Sunday of each month from June through December, **Abbraccio Restaurant** will host NGA as the recipient of their **Sunday Breakfast Buffet Donation Program**. Abbraccio is located at 820 South 47th Street next to Warrington Community Garden in West Philadelphia. For menus and other information, visit www.abbracciorestaurant.com. After brunch, check out the goings-on at Warrington Community Garden. Watch the NGA website and your mailbox for *Open Garden Days* details as they become available.

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NGA's United Way code number is: 8206.

Thank you for your support!

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(215) 988-8797
Greg Gregson, Preservation Specialist
e-mail: gregg@ngalandtrust.org
(215) 988-8799

web: www.ngalandtrust.org

EVENTS CALENDAR

Open Garden Days events planned so far:

May 1st: *Fitzwater 2000 Garden* near 21st and Fitzwater Streets and the *Southwark/Queen Village Garden* at 3rd and Christian Streets will welcome visitors and hold flea markets and plant sales to benefit the gardens.

Beginning June 13th: NGA will be a recipent of Abbraccio Restaurant's Sunday Breakfast Buffet Donation Program on the 2nd Sunday of every month from June thru December. Support NGA from 11 am to 2:30 pm at 820 South 47th Street. Call 215-727-8247 or find them on the web at: www.abbracciorestaurant.com

June 5th from 2 to 6pm: *Aspen Farms Community Garden Party* to celebrate joining the land trust! Come be a part of the festivities and tour this award-winning garden.

Well-Preserved

Updates from

Neighborhood Gardens Association

A Philadelphia Land Trust

Preserving community-managed open space since 1986

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Editor: Margot Berg

Message from the Executive Director

Many thanks to the gardeners and supporters who braved the rain to celebrate the preservation of Aspen Farms Community Garden in June, and who attended the Abbraccio Restaurant Sunday brunches to benefit NGA in June and July. We hope you'll come out to the next Abbraccio Restaurant brunch for NGA in August and to Rx Restaurant in August to benefit NGA. We are grateful for both restaurants and their commitment to supporting local nonprofits working to improve Philadelphia. Read details about these two benefit events on page 4.

I hope your gardens are thriving, and that you're finding new surprises and new challenges in your gardening this summer.

Terry

Gardeners from Martha Washington Middle School at Aspen Farms Community Garden.

NGA SPOTLIGHT: *Summer-Winter*

This issue's Spotlight focuses on one of NGA's leased land trust gardens: the Summer-Winter Community Garden at 33rd and Race Streets in West Philadelphia.

A long, meandering pathway cuts diagonally through this dramatic garden in West Philadelphia's University City. The garden extends from Race to Winter Street, and from 33rd to Natrona Street.

NGA does not own the Summer-Winter property, but leases the land from the City of Philadelphia on an annual basis. A long-term lease of a City-owned property is a way to keep established, long-standing gardens growing on land of which outright acquisition is not currently feasible because of zoning or other constraints. It allows the garden to continue until a future time when NGA or another entity can ensure its permanence.

Summer-Winter Garden boasts 32 plots, two water features, and two sitting areas with architectural and sculptural elements. Fruit trees, vegetables and herbs abound; a brilliant variety of flowers including bright lavender echinacea line the paths and landscaped areas. Frogs and turtles can be found here, and an arched entryway invites you to enter and enjoy this unusual respite from the surrounding city blocks.

Joe Revlock at work in the garden.

The garden has always maintained a strong connection to the surrounding university community. Every year, Drexel and Penn students perform community service work here, contributing countless hours to creating and maintaining the garden. Joe Revlock, along with his wife Beverly Agard and gardeners Ed Hermance, Phillip Berryman, and Dierdre Martin started the one-acre garden with the help of the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society in 1978. An index card manufacturing facility formerly stood on the site. "When we started gardening here, the ground was mostly brick, clay, and concrete rubble. If it weren't for the volunteer efforts of the Drexel and Penn student community, we would not have the oasis we all enjoy today."

NGA and the Summer-Winter gardeners are working to preserve this garden for the betterment of the neighborhood and the delight of all that pass through.

GARDEN UPDATES

Summer Improvements

Two more gardens now have water systems. Joe Caltagirone of the Tulip Street Garden can now easily water his cherished flower and sitting garden in New Kensington. Aspen Farms, the newest land trusted garden, winterized their water connection that was installed by the Philadelphia Water Department as part of a pilot program. Also, NGA replaced the aging and deteriorated sidewalks around Aspen Farms in May. OHCD funds, matched by donations from the Connelly and Lincoln Financial Group Foundations, provided for new sidewalks along two sides of of this extraordinary garden. A new fence will soon be installed at the Stillman Street Garden in the Fairmount neighborhood.

Summer-Winter Garden

A Natural Connection

Thank you Whole Foods! The Callowhill Street store provided delicious food for the Aspen Farms party in June, and last year selected NGA as a 5% Day recipient. The South Street store donated delicious cookies last year. We thank Whole Foods for partnering with NGA and other area nonprofits working to improve the quality of life in our community. Many thanks also to The Fresh Grocer, Pepsi, Iovine Brothers Produce, and Super Fresh for their generous donations to the Aspen Farms Party.

Find photos and information about all of the land trust gardens, as well as urban land trusts in other cities, at:

www.ngalandtrust.org

New Partner

NGA is delighted to have received the support of The James L. Knight Foundation. Brothers John S. and James L. Knight owned newspapers throughout the United States and contributed to numerous charitable causes. The staff, Board, and land trust gardeners are grateful for Knight and all of the other contributors to NGA, that provide the support necessary for our work preserving community gardens and green spaces.

Help Save Community Gardens

NGA is a nonprofit urban land trust preserving community-managed gardens and green spaces in Philadelphia's neighborhoods. We need your support!

___$50 ___$100 ___$250 ___Other

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(as you wish to be acknowledged in our publications)

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(215) 988-8799

web: www.ngalandtrust.org

Email Margot if you would like to receive the newsletter and NGA announcements via email.

EVENTS CALENDAR

August 8th and September 12th, 11 AM to 2 PM: Abbraccio Restaurant's Sunday Breakfast Buffet Donation Program for NGA. 5% of the proceeds go to NGA for garden preservation. Lots of yummy choices from traditional to exotic, outdoor seating overlooks Warrington Garden next door. Second Sunday of the month through December. 820 South 47th Street. 215-727-8247 or on the web at: www.abbracciorestaurant.com.

August 12th from 5:30 to 10 pm: Rx Restaurant Benefit Dinner for NGA. A $30 prix fix dinner will be served, and a portion of the proceeds will be donated to NGA. Rx, at 4443 Spruce Street, is a BYOB which serves contemporary cuisine and uses locally grown, organic, and humanely raised ingredients. Call 215-222-9590 for reservations.

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Editor: Margot Berg

Message from the Executive Director

One of the great joys of my job is the wonderful people I have met along the way. March marks my sixth year as Executive Director of NGA and my twenty-eighth year working with community gardeners in Philadelphia. It has truly been my pleasure to be a part of this effort. As a "transplant" from Ohio, I have learned a great deal about gardening and life from the community people I have worked with over the years.

Some of these special people are mentioned in the Garden Spotlight on Point Breeze Gardens -- 2005 is their tenth year as preserved community green spaces. Alta Felton and Mamie Nichols are amazing community gardeners -- and people -- who helped create the community greening movement that is still going strong a quarter of a century later. They may have had to hang up their gardening gloves due to age and illness, but their spirit lives on in the people who have followed.

This spring, NGA is actively working on a dozen new garden acquisitions while continuing to support the 25 gardens currently in the land trust with funding for physical improvements. Several new fencing projects will be completed this season making these gardens even more attractive assets in their neighborhoods. Thanks go to all of our partners -- foundations, individual donors, community gardeners, and corporations.

From the dedication of Point Breeze Gardens in 1995

NGA SPOTLIGHT: *POINT BREEZE*

This issue's Spotlight focuses on the nine land trusted gardens in the Point Breeze neighborhood.

Nine gardens in the Point Breeze area are celebrating ten years in the land trust. South of Washington Avenue and east of the Schuylkill Expressway, Point Breeze has a long history of community gardening. Dozens of community green spaces were created here in the 1980s as one of PHS Philadelphia Green's earliest Greene Countrie Townes. Mamie Nichols of the Point Breeze Federation worked with local residents to turn trash-filled vacant lots into gardens and parks to improve the neighborhood.

***The Concert Garden* at 21st and Ellsworth Streets** has hosted jazz concerts and weddings, as well as birthday parties for local children.

***Keith's Garden* at 22nd and Ellsworth Streets** is a sitting park where artist Keith Haring painted his mural *"We the Youth"* with help from local children in 1987.

When NGA was formed in 1986, Point Breeze was one of the first neighborhoods that NGA worked in to help preserve community gardens. Several of the large community garden "farms" along 29th Street and Grays Ferry Avenue had been sold for development, and there was a desire to preserve some of the other gardens if possible. Most of the Garden Coordinators NGA worked with were retired African American women over 60 who had learned to garden as children growing up on farms in the South. Farming was in their blood, and they grew vegetables and fruits for their families and neighbors. Patches of green sprouted up throughout Point Breeze because of volunteers Alta Felton, her daughter Rosetta, Josephine Jackson, and Anna Davis. As the original gardeners are now in their 80s, NGA is working to encourage new gardeners to nurture these Point Breeze treasures.

***The Feng Shui Garden* at 17th and Federal Streets** was overgrown by the 1990s. It was reclaimed in 2000 by local young people who have a new vision for the site, and have installed a tribute to the victims of September 11th.

NGA preserved nine Point Breeze Gardens - the largest grouping of land trust gardens in the city. Most of these are small, single-lot gardens and sitting parks.

GARDEN UPDATES

NGA's Acquisition Fund

Communities all around Philadelphia are actively planning for, creating, and working to preserve their neighborhood gardens and green spaces. NGA has seen a marked increase in the demand for assistance with preserving these gardens. At the same time, a strong real estate market has meant that the asking prices for the "vacant" lots on which these gardens have been created has increased steadily over the last few years. As a nonprofit organization, NGA relies on charitable donations from foundations, corporations, and individual donors to provide the funding for all of its operations and activities. NGA's original funding for acquiring properties for preservation was granted in 1986 by the Pew Charitable Trusts. NGA is seeking to create a new Acquisition Fund so that we can continue to acquire and preserve community green spaces in Philadelphia neighborhoods. NGA kicked-off the fundraising efforts last summer with an event at Bel Arbor Community Garden. If you'd like to donate specifically to the acquisition fund, just make a note on your check or donation form. Help place more gardens in the land trust!

Thanks to our Funders

NGA is delighted to have received a grant from The McLean Contributionship to help fund garden improvements. The NGA Board, staff and land trust gardeners are grateful for McLean and all of NGA's other donors this year.

www.ngalandtrust.org

Garden Improvements

NGA continues with the fourth year of the Garden Improvement Project. Since 2002, the City's Office of Housing and Neighborhood Revitalization has awarded NGA with an annual $25,000 grant to make major physical improvements to older gardens in the land trust. This grant must be matched dollar-for-dollar by private donations. Planned improvements for 2005 include: new fencing, streetscape improvements, tool storage facilites, and installing electrical service at gardens.

New fence for Seedy Acres

Clip and send with your donation!

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web: www.ngalandtrust.org

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EVENTS CALENDAR

Wednesdays April 27, May 4, and May 11 & Saturday May 7: The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society's Philadelphia Green Program Tree Tenders Project. Train to be a tree tender and help tend our urban forest. Learn all aspects of tree awareness and community organizing for neighborhood greening. Call Mindy Maslin at 215-988-8844 or email her at mmaslin@pennhort.org to register.

PHS Philadelphia Green City Gardening Series: various topics and locations on dates from March 16th through April 30th. Call Marilyn Reynolds for info: 215-988-8872.

April 29th and 30th, 10AM to 2PM: Spring Plant Sale at the Fairmount Park Horticulture Center. Buy annuals, house plants, flower boxes, hanging baskets, and scented geraniums. Montgomery Drive near Belmont Avenue in Fairmount Park.

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Editor: Margot Berg

Message from the Executive Director

Memorial Day has passed and the official beginning of summer is right around the corner. In my travels around the city, I have been stopping by the land trust gardens to see how they are doing this season, and have been impressed with the lush growth. The cool early spring weather with just enough rain has done wonders.

I hope you will join us at one of the parties this summer. Seedy Acres Garden is now completely preserved after years of struggling, and will throw a party to celebrate on June 26th. On July 9th, NGA and Philadelphia Green are co-sponsoring a Celebration of Community Gardens at The Spring Gardens, 18th and Wallace Streets. The gardeners are celebrating their 10th season by inviting gardeners from around the city to join them for an afternoon party in the garden.

As NGA approaches its 20th anniversary, the Board of Directors and staff are undertaking a strategic planning process to evaluate the efforts of the past and look for new ways to help Philadelphia community residents preserve their beloved gardens and green spaces in the future. NGA believes that every community should have access to green space just as William Penn envisioned in his Greene Countrie Towne plan. Stay tuned for the results next year.

NGA SPOTLIGHT: *The Spring Gardens*

This issue's Spotlight focuses on The Spring Gardens community garden north of Center City.

At 18th and Wallace Streets, in the Spring Garden neighborhood, *The Spring Gardens* community garden flourishes on an entire city block. Before the garden, the block was home to numerous vacant lots, and a few abandoned rowhouses and car-repair shops. The City cleared and leveled the lots in 1996, and neighborhood resident Stephan White and others began to transform the two-acre site into a vegetable and flower garden, meeting-place and urban oasis. After the first growing season, Philadelphia Green and the Spring Garden Civic Association donated funding to create the garden's raised beds. Today, this thriving community garden has over 180 plots gardened by neighborhood families, including African-Americans, Puerto Ricans, Asians, and eastern Europeans. Through a grant, The Spring Gardens installed the beautiful wrought iron fence depicting tall grasses which has become a symbol of the garden.

A resident of Spring Garden for 30 years, Stephan says that this once-divided community came together around the garden. "We discovered that we care about the same things," he reflects. The garden has played a role in the area's evolution and renewal -- from one plagued by abandonment and decay to a diverse and highly desirable place to live.

The garden hosts neighborhood events, workshops, plant sales and flea markets. New street trees, sidewalks and a raised perimeter bed with evergreen and perennial plantings have been added. The block is now a major asset - replacing drug dealing and trash dumping with beauty and kinship.

The gardeners want this spectacular green space to be preserved as a permanent feature of the neighborhood. A *Celebration of Community Gardens* and a raffle to raise money for preservation will be held here on July 9th. Call NGA and say you'll come!

GARDEN UPDATES

Solar Power – A Bright Idea for the Gardens

Over the last four years, the NGA Garden Improvement Project has funded water connections, new fencing, and safe sidewalks at most of the larger land trust gardens. At the top of this year's list is installing electricity at the gardens to allow for the use of lights and power tools. Two gardens, Glenwood Green Acres and the North Street Garden, have traditional electrical systems for the security lights installed at their gardens in recent years. NGA has paid for the installation costs with community block grant funds and grants from local foundations and businesses. The gardeners pay for their monthly usage. Four more gardens have electricity high on their wish list and, with NGA, are pursuing the installation of solar-powered lighting. West Philadelphia's Aspen Farms and the Southwark / Queen Village Garden will be the first two gardens to receive these systems. The design will allow them to use traditional electricity when needed and to transfer units of power collected by the solar panels to PECO during the sunny days of the year. The gardeners hope to generate more than they use and end up with energy credits. The solar systems are expensive to install but will allow the gardeners to avoid monthly electric bills and make them more sustainable into the future. We hope to have these systems installed this summer.

Seedy Acres Celebration

On June 26th, the Seedy Acres community gardeners at Leithgow and Poplar Streets will celebrate the final preservation of their garden. From 4 to 7PM, $5 gets you their signature silent auction, food, music, and vodka snowcones.

Raffle to Benefit NGA's Acquisition Fund

NGA thanks all of those who sent in a donation for the Garden Acquisition Fund in response to the Spring newsletter, helping to preserve more community green spaces in Philadelphia. NGA will hold its second raffle to raise money for the Garden Acquisition Fund - this year at The Spring Gardens community garden party at 18th and Wallace Streets on July 9th. Lots of fabulous prizes will be raffled off, and you don't have to be present to win. If you'd like to buy raffle tickets now, call Margot at 215-988-8797.

www.ngalandtrust.org

Clip and send with your donation!

Help Save Community Gardens

NGA is a nonprofit urban land trust preserving community-managed gardens and green spaces in Philadelphia's neighborhoods. We need your support!

___$50 ___$100 ___$250 ___Other

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CONTACT NGA

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Greg Gregson, Preservation Specialist
e-mail: gregg@ngalandtrust.org
(215) 988-8799

web: www.ngalandtrust.org

Email Margot if you would like to receive the newsletter and NGA announcements via email.

EVENTS CALENDAR

Saturday June 26: Garden party at Seedy Acres Community Garden to celebrate the final preservation of the garden. Leithgow and Poplar Streets in Northern Liberties 4 to 7 PM. Food, music, vodka snowcones; silent auction of artist-made bird houses. A $5 donation is requested.

Saturday July 9: A *Celebration of Community Gardens* at The Spring Gardens, 18th and Wallace Streets, 4 to 7PM. Music, various ethnic foods made by gardeners, and a raffle of great prizes to benefit the garden and NGA's Garden Acquisition Fund. RSVP 215-988-8797.

Saturday July 23: Plant Swap, 9 AM to noon. Bring plants to trade with other gardeners. Sponsored by Aubury Arboretum Community Garden, Francis Cope House off Chew Avenue near Washington Lane.

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Well-Preserved

Updates from

Neighborhood Gardens Association

A Philadelphia Land Trust

Preserving community-managed green spaces since 1986

Vol. 13 • No. 3

Fall 2005

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The Neighborhood Gardens Association / A Philadelphia Land Trust (NGA) is a private non-profit corporation founded in 1986. The mission of the land trust is to ensure the continuity and long-term preservation of community-managed gardens and open space in low and moderate-income neighborhoods.

Editor: Margot Berg

Message from the Executive Director

Fall is here and the harvest season is upon us. While the high temperatures and dry conditions made for a difficult gardening season, the land trust gardens continued to thrive with the help of their watering systems and the dedication of the gardeners.

At the *Celebration of Community Gardens* in July, revelers celebrated the 10th anniversary of The Spring Gardens -- the spectacular community garden at 18th and Wallace Streets in the Spring Garden neighborhood. NGA and the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society co-sponsored the event with the gardeners, and NGA held it's second annual raffle to benefit the Garden Acquisition Fund. The party was a great success -- a beautiful day with terrific turn-out and the gardeners' signature barbeque dishes reflecting the diversity of the families that garden there.

NGA, in collaboration with Urban Partners -- a Philadelphia consulting firm -- has begun a strategic planning process to determine the future direction of the organization. 2006 will mark NGA's twentieth anniversary and much has changed in Philadelphia during that time. The Board and staff recognize the need to re-evaluate NGA's mission and activities in light of these changes. The plan is funded by the William Penn Foundation and will take approximately six months. We look forward to sharing the results with you.

NGA SPOTLIGHT: *New Gardens*

This issue's Spotlight focuses on two new gardens joining the NGA land trust.

After a two year process, NGA and the gardeners at two community gardens in North Philadelphia have received title from the City for their gardens. The Friends Community Garden on North Front Street in West Kensington and the North Marshall Street Garden are the latest additions to the land trust. They join twenty-eight other gardens that are permanent parts of their neighborhoods preserved through NGA.

Friends Community Garden at **2751-2753 North Front Street** reflects the heritage of its Puerto Rican gardeners. Saro Rodriguez, his wife, and neighbors have created a neighborhood place for local youth programs to bring children to learn to garden. The gardeners started this garden in 2003 after attending the Philadelphia Green Garden Tenders class. The front of the garden is landscaped like a private front yard and frames a casita, a small house typical of those in Puerto Rico, complete with

an outdoor kitchen where gardeners prepare traditional Latino dishes. Vegetable plots at the back of the lot are a source for many of the distinctive dishes served at garden events.

Learn about other NGA gardens on our website:

www.ngalandtrust.org

Not far away from the Friends Community Garden, Bob Jacobs, his family, and neighbors have been gardening in the **1900 block of North Marshall Street** for several years. Ten gardeners from the block grow vegetables in raised beds built with the help of APM (the Association of Puerto Ricans on the March) and Philadelphia Green in 2001. The garden covers four lots, one of which is owned by the City and was donated to the land trust and the gardeners this fall. NGA is also pursuing ownership of the other three lots.

Both gardens are part of a new Philadelphia Green program. Twenty gardens have committed to growing and donating extra produce to SHARE, a local food cupboard program. The donated vegetables will be distributed to help alleviate hunger in the City and participants will learn to increase their production and harvest their crops more efficiently, a winning combination for everyone. NGA is pleased that eleven of the land trust gardens will participate in this worthwhile program in 2006.

GARDEN UPDATES

Please support these generous businesses that supported NGA's 2005 raffle.

The July raffle in support of NGA's Garden Acquisition Fund was a great success. We thank the forty-eight local businesses and institutions that donated crafts, gift baskets, art classes, and gift certificates for the Celebration of Community Gardens at The Spring Gardens at 18th and Wallace. Please support these contributors that gave generously to NGA. We also thank The Spring Gardens gardeners and everyone who bought raffle tickets. If you won a gift certificate, please use it so we can request one again next year!

Arden Theater
Aveda
Benjamin Lovell Shoes
The Body Klinic Spa
The Bridge Cinema De Lux
Bridgid's Restaurant
Las Cazuelas Restaurant
The Clay Studio
The Cookbook Stall
Eastern State Penitentiary
Fairmount Chiropractor
Fante's Kitchen Wares Shop
Fine Gardening Magazine
Fleisher Art Memorial
Fork Restaurant
Friday Saturday Sunday Restaurant
Hello World
Hot Soup Glassblowing Studio
Illuminaire Restaurant
Kiehl's Since 1851
The Kimmel Center
Lifesport Fitness
Loie Brasserie & NoChe Lounge
London Grill
Mandoline Restaurant
Moore Brothers Wine Company
Mugshots Coffeehouse
Kevin O'Brien Studio
Origins
Neil Patterson & Sandi Pierantozzi Ceramics
Primex Garden Center
Rembrandt's Restaurant
Rittenhouse Sports Specialties
Ritz Theaters
Sophie's Yarns
SOTA (Spirit of the Artist)
Sun & Earth, Inc.
Tavern on Green
Tower Records
Valanni Restaurant
Viv Pickle
Wake Up Yoga
Washington Square Chiropractic Center
Waterloo Gardens
The White Dog Café & the Black Cat
Whole Foods Market
Wilma Theater
Zorba's Taverna

Preserved Gardens

As of July 2005, NGA had preserved thirty community gardens throughout the city. Twenty-one were acquired from the City or individuals, three have long-term leases ensuring their use as a garden, and six are in process.

Bel Arbor is 10!

October 15th marked Bel Arbor Community Garden's tenth anniversary. Congratulations to the Bel Arbor gardeners!

Clip and send with your donation!

Help Save Community Gardens

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___$50 ___$100 ___$250 ___ $500 ___Other

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web: www.ngalandtrust.org

Email Margot if you would like to receive the newsletter and NGA announcements via email.

EVENTS CALENDAR

Saturday, October 22, 10AM - 5PM. Fall Open House at Meadowbrook Farm 1633 Washington Lane, Abington, PA. A costume party for the kids and fall shopping for all. Call 215-887-5900.

City Gardening Series. Various locations in October and November. Gardening-related workshops, demonstrations, and events. Call Marilyn Reynolds at 215-988-8872.

Tree Tenders Training in Media and West Chester in October. Learn tree biology, identification, and care for the trees in your community. Call Mindy Maslin at 215-988-8844.

Vacant Land Redefined exhibit at 3101 Walnut Street at UPenn. NGA & Philadelphia Green display opens November 30. Call 215-573-7240.

Well-Preserved

Newsletter of the

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A Philadelphia Land Trust

Preserving community-managed green spaces since 1986

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Winter 2006

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The Neighborhood Gardens Association / A Philadelphia Land Trust (NGA) *is a private nonprofit corporation founded in 1986. Its mission is to ensure the continuity and long-term preservation of community-managed gardens and green spaces in Philadelphia neighborhoods.*

NGA is 20 years old

Happy Birthday to the Neighborhood Gardens Association. Twenty years ago, the NGA land trust was created to preserve and protect community-managed green spaces in Philadelphia that might otherwise be lost to development. NGA and the community gardeners have had great successes over the years, as well as a few disappointments. Community gardeners in Philadelphia are an incredibly diverse group of energetic and committed people, working in neighborhoods throughout the city, all with a similar goal -- to make their community better. We look ahead to the next twenty years with great anticipation and excitement, and hope to add many more gardens to the list of preserved. Read inside for information on the history of NGA, as well as a list of the land trust gardens and the year they were preserved.

The Board and staff are extremely grateful to all of the contributors to NGA who, over the years, have supported our mission. We thank you. Now in its 20th year of preserving community-managed gardens and green spaces in neighborhoods, NGA is looking forward to the future and is considering the possible expansion of its mission in response to changes that have occurred in Philadelphia over the last several years. NGA will celebrate this major anniversary in the summer with a special event to be announced. Check the website in the spring for information.

Warrington Community Garden

SPOTLIGHT ON: *NGA's History*

This issue's Spotlight focuses on the history of the Neighborhood Gardens Association.

In the 1970s, the community gardening movement had spread to Philadelphia. Through the work of individuals, the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society (PHS) and the Penn State Urban Gardening Program (PSUGP), vegetable and flower gardens were sprouting up on vacant, blighted lots throughout the city's neighborhoods. They quickly became positive forces for change in these communities. By the 1980s, it had become clear that developers looking for vacant lots to build on would choose community garden lots over unimproved vacant lots. PHS and PSUGP, with other community partners, formed the Neighborhood Gardens Association as a land trust to preserve community-managed gardens and green spaces that were important to the neighborhoods and needed to be made permanent.

Gardeners at Bel Arbor

NGA took its name from the original *Neighborhood Garden Association*, founded in 1953 by Louise Bush-Brown, an author of gardening books and the Director of the Pennsylvania School of Horticulture in Ambler. After a trip to Europe, she got the idea that, in her words, "if window boxes were introduced into the depressed areas of Philadelphia it would lift the spirits of the people living there and improve the neighborhoods in looks as well". The presidents of local garden clubs volunteered to plant flowers in window boxes and on vacant lots. The program was a great success: inspiring neighbors to work together to improve the neighborhood. Over 450 Garden Blocks were planted, affecting over 150,000 residents. One of the original volunteers, Charlotte Stokes, was the President of the Germantown Garden Club and is now 90 years old and living in Roxborough. Mrs. Stokes recalls those days with a great sense of pride. She was particularly fond of her work with the residents of 15th and Rodman Street where a policeman said to the volunteers: "Ladies, you're wasting your time".

But these ladies knew the power of greening. Rodman Street was transformed into a place of beautiful flowers where neighbors were no longer strangers, and where they helped each other, kept their block clean, and were inspired to improve their community. The Garden Block Program received national and international attention for its successful approach to fighting blight in Philadelphia. As a tribute to this groundbreaking work, the land trust adopted the name "**Neighborhood Gardens Association/A Philadelphia Land Trust**".

Garden Coordinator James Taylor at Glenwood Green Acres

Read more about the Garden Block Program in Philadelphia in *Garden Blocks for Urban America*, by Louise Bush-Brown, 1969.

Garden Coordinator Hayward Ford at Aspen Farms, preserved in 2004

GARDEN UPDATES

The following are the NGA Land Trust Gardens and the Year Preserved

Seedy Acres - 1990, 1992 & 2004
Church Lane - 1991
Southwark/Queen Village - 1991 (lease)
Grays Ferry - 1992
Warrington Garden - 1992
Kauffman Green - 1992
Point Breeze Seven - 1992 & 1995
Chester Avenue - 1993
Stillman Street - 1994
North Street - 1996
Glenwood Green Acres - 1997
Rainbow Park - 1997
Tulip Street - 1998 & 2000
Summer/Winter - 2000 (lease)
Bel Arbor - 1999
Aspen Farms - 2004
2100 Fitzwater - 2004
Pentridge - 2005 (lease)

In addition to the above twenty-four permanently preserved gardens, another thirteen are pending. We hope to be able to add them to the "preserved" list soon.

Lemon Ridge Garden - A Miraculous Story

Last spring, NGA was approached by a brother and sister who wanted to donate their land at the corner of Ridge Avenue, 13th, and Mount Vernon Streets for a gardening project. The land was being used for scrap storage, and they wanted to donate it for a community garden or park. Several weeks later, over fifty people attended a community meeting in the neighborhood, and the Lemon Ridge Garden was born. NGA worked with the gardeners for over nine months to get the land appraised, research the environmental history, and plan for a new community garden/park. Lemon Ridge Garden, Inc. took title to the land by the December 31st deadline and is now working to clear the land for their first gardening season this year. NGA applauds their efforts and will continue to provide technical assistance as needed. For information about Lemon Ridge, call 215-765-4140, or log onto www.lemonridge.org

Future site of Lemon Ridge Garden

Learn about NGA gardens on our website: www.ngalandtrust.org

Clip and send with your donation!

Help Save Community Gardens - NGA's 20th Anniversary Year

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web: www.ngalandtrust.org

Email Margot if you would like to receive the newsletter via email. Please let us know if you would like your name removed from our mailing list. Thank you!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Aspen Farms included in the Archives of American Gardens

The Aspen Farms Community Garden at 49th and Aspen Streets is now part of the Smithsonian Institution's Archives of American Gardens (AAG). Ann Reed, a volunteer for the Garden Club of America submitted photos of this award-winning garden. Aspen is one of over 5,700 gardens included in the AAG, a source used by researchers and the general public for scholarly, educational, and inspirational purposes. You can search their website at www.siris.si.edu for garden images and other information.

Well-Preserved

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Preserving community-managed green spaces since 1986

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Spring is here and gardening is in full swing. NGA continues its work preserving community-managed gardens and green spaces around Philadelphia and, through our stategic planning efforts, determining the future role of the organization in the city.

We have exciting summer plans! For our twentieth anniversary, and to share our new solar energy systems, NGA and the gardeners will hold **Solar Sun*day in the Garden** at Aspen Farms in June. Visitors can get a first-hand look at the solar system while enjoying the beauty of this award-winning community garden. On the first official days of summer, NGA will be the recipient of **Borders Benefit Days.** You can use your NGA coupons to shop at Borders stores. You'll get 10% off and NGA will receive a 10% donation. In July, **The White Dog Café** will host an NGA community garden trolley tour, which includes a light breakfast before and lunch at the café after visiting several of the gardens. NGA is thrilled to have the support of these two businesses.

Finally, we're throwing ourselves a **20th Birthday Party** at Southwark Queen Village on **July 21st** (the actually date of NGA's incorporation) from 4 to 7 PM. Come and try your luck at our now-famous raffle, and help us celebrate with cake in the garden!

Read on for more information.
See you in the garden!

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Young gardener at Glenwood Green Acres

SPOTLIGHT ON: *Solar Energy*

This issue's Spotlight focuses on solar energy systems installed at two NGA gardens.

Two award-winning community gardens in Philadelphia neighborhoods have chosen to go solar with their energy systems in order to conserve energy, be environmentally friendly, and reduce expenses. The gardens are Aspen Farms Community Garden at 49th and Aspen Streets in West Philadelphia and the Southwark Queen Village Community Garden at 3rd and Christian Streets in South Philadelphia. Solar energy contractors installed clean-running, state-of-the-art systems, which were paid for by Neighborhood Gardens Association donors with grants from the Office of Housing and Community Development and several foundations.

Solar panels installed on the shed at Aspen Farms

A solar-powered pump maintains the pond at Aspen Farms

The gardens have installed "grid-connected photovoltaic systems". These solar systems use panels of photovoltaic cells, which directly convert sunlight into electricity. Also called grid interface systems, they supply surplus power back through the grid to the utility, and take from the utility grid when the system's power supply is low. In addition, the gardens participate in "net metering", which allows the gardeners to sell excess solar power back to PECO. The gardeners have chosen solar energy because it is non-polluting and renewable, extremely reliable, silent, and low-maintenance, and it requires no special training to operate. Power is used at the gardens to run lights and other ongoing electrical needs, some gardening tools, equipment, and for special events.

View south at Southwark Queen Village Garden

Learn about other NGA gardens on our website: www.ngalandtrust.org

GARDEN UPDATES

Borders Benefit Days
June 22, 23, and 24

Borders has selected NGA to be the recipent of *Borders Benefit Days* in June. Use the Borders coupon included here and bring it to participating Borders stores on **June 22, 23, or 24**. You'll get 10% off your purchase and Borders will donate 10% of your final purchase amount to NGA. Coupons are also on our website at www. ngalandtrust.org. If you don't have access to the internet please call us and we'd be happy to mail you some. Shop at Center City, Chestnut Hill, Bryn Mawr and Wynnewood locations. Give coupons to your friends, fellow gardeners, fellow book-lovers. ***Note: If you print-out or copy coupons, they must be on white paper only.** Please support NGA and thanks!

Church Lane Garden

Chris and Helen Nicholson,
Garden Coordinators

One of the biggest pleasures of this work is the people that you meet in the gardens. They are all ages, races, and cultural backgrounds, but they all have one thing in common – a willingness to give of their time to make their communities greener places to live and work.

Chris and Helen Nicholson are examples of this dedication. They have been married for 56 years and raised four children in Germantown. In the 1960s, The Redevelopment Authority acquired and demolished the 200 block of East Church Lane in order to build the Belfield Bypass. Neighbors fought the project and won, only to be left with vacant land that became a dumping ground for trash. In 1978, the Nicholsons and their neighbors decided to use the land for a community garden. The PHS Philadelphia Green program supplied fencing, tools, and soil, and the neighbors cleared the lot and began gardening there. Nine years later, the RDA put the garden up for sale. The gardeners approached the newly-formed NGA for help saving Church Lane Garden. NGA and the gardeners negotiated a 10-year mortgage with RDA to buy the land for $11,000. The mortgage was paid off in nine years and the garden is now permanently preserved.

continued...

Today, the Church Lane Garden has eighteen gardeners as diverse as its Germantown neighborhood. One of the Nicholson's daughters and her husband are active in the garden as well, making it a family tradition. Each year high school students from the Germantown Friends School spend a day in the garden helping to get it ready for spring. Several years ago, they built a wall along Church Lane with broken pieces of the old sidewalk that was being replaced. The wall still stands and is a lovely border for the garden.

The White Dog Café partners with NGA

In honor of NGA's twentieth anniversary year, **The White Dog Café** will hold a community tour of NGA gardens on **Saturday, July 8th** starting at 8:30 AM. Tickets are $45 and include coffee and muffins, a motorized trolley tour to some of the gardens and lunch at the café. The tour will be led by NGA's Executive Director Terry Mushovic. The White Dog will donate a portion of your purchase price to NGA for community green space preservation. For details and to buy tickets, call the café at **215-386-9224** or go to **whitedogcafe.com**. We hope you'll come!

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Greg Gregson, Preservation Specialist
e-mail: gregg@ngalandtrust.org
(215) 988-8799

• •

More announcements...

Flea Market Days at Hansberry Garden & Nature Center, 2nd Saturday of the month, May through September. Rent a table for $10 and sell your stuff to raise money for your garden. Wayne Avenue and Hansberry Street. Call Dorothy Hannibal at 215-438-9190.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Solar Sun*day at Aspen Farms: Sunday, June 18th from 2 to 4PM. Come check-out the new solar system and enjoy the garden. 49th and Aspen Streets.

Borders Benefit Days for NGA! Shop at select Borders locations on June 22, 23, and 24. You'll get 10% off and Borders will donate 10% of your purchase amount to NGA. Use coupons included here or on our website. Thank you!

White Dog Café Neighborhood Tour of NGA Gardens: Saturday July 8th at 8:30 AM. Includes coffee and breakfast breads, trolley tour, and lunch at the Café all for $45. White Dog will donate a portion of the proceeds to NGA. Call 215-386-9224 for registration and details.

Happy 20th NGA! Friday, July 21st from 4 to 7PM. Come celebrate 20 years of preserving community green spaces. Raffle, refreshments, and birthday cake at Southwark Queen Village Garden, 3rd and Christian Streets. RSVP 215-988-8797.

Well-Preserved

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Preserving community-managed green spaces since 1986

Vol. 14 • No. 2

Summer 2006

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THANK YOU

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Our Mission

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Thanks to all of NGA's friends and supporters who came out to help celebrate NGA's 20th Birthday at the Southwark Queen Village Garden on July 21st. The rain held off long enough for us to enjoy live music, refreshments, birthday cake, and a raffle and silent auction. NGA was presented with a City Council Citation from Councilman Frank Rizzo's office congratulating NGA for 20 years of preserving community gardens. The money raised at the party will be used to preserve more neighborhood green spaces like Southwark.

Southwark Queen Village Garden celebrates its 30th anniversary in September

SPOTLIGHT ON: *NGA Donors*

This issue's Spotlight focuses on NGA's contributors.

Of the handful of urban land trusts across the country, NGA is one of the only privately-funded ones. The Chicago and Los Angeles land trusts receive most of their operating support from local government. The City of Philadelphia has generously donated garden land, but NGA has always had to rely on a variety of non-governmental supporters to fund its operating expenses. For the first several years of its existence, NGA was supported by the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society (PHS), the Pew Charitable Trusts, and the William Penn Foundation. PHS and the William Penn Foundation have continued to support NGA, but other donors were needed.

In 1992, NGA sent out its first fundraising appeal and began a partnership with gardeners and others from the city and suburbs who believed in NGA's mission to preserve some of Philadelphia's most important community gardens. Individual donorations ranged from $10 to a few thousand, and many of these initial donors have contributed to NGA every year since. Area garden clubs and family foundations are also among our supporters, and we are very grateful for their contributions.

Community gardeners have also contributed to the land trust. Although NGA does not charge gardeners annual dues or fees, several garden groups have agreed to reimburse some of the cost of acquiring their garden land, typically over a ten year period. The payments are placed in a revolving acquisition fund that can then be used to help purchase the next garden. Five land trust gardens have repaid funds ranging from $8,000 to $35,000. Gardeners raise the money using a variety of methods – flea markets, plant sales, donations from neighbors and the gardeners themselves. In some cases, land trust gardeners have contributed to the acquisition fundraising efforts of newer gardens, helping them to become preserved green spaces as well.

Community gardens exist due to the generous support and dedication of neighborhood residents. NGA and the land trust gardeners are grateful for all of the individual, business, foundation, and city support we have received over the years. Working together, we have all made Philadelphia a greener, more vital place to live, work, and visit. **Thank you.**

Gardeners and supporters at Aspen Farms

Learn about NGA gardens on our website: www.ngalandtrust.org

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The Following Businesses
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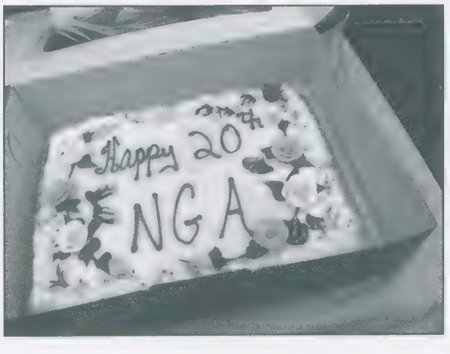

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CONTACT NGA

For information on preserving a Philadelphia community garden or contributing to NGA:

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Greg Gregson, Preservation Specialist
e-mail: gregg@ngalandtrust.org
(215) 988-8799

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Southwark Queen Village Garden is NGA's newest solar-powered garden. Solar panels, below, were installed and collect energy to run power tools and provice electricity for special events.

Well-Preserved

Newsletter of the

Neighborhood Gardens Association/
A Philadelphia Land Trust

Preserving community-managed green spaces since 1986

Vol. 15 • No. 2
Fall 2007

In This Issue

Three New Preserved Gardens

Aspen Farms Cistern Project

Special Donor

Office Move

Our Mission

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Contact NGA

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Moving Forward with NGA's Strategic Plan

In the spring issue of the newsletter, I wrote about the findings that resulted from the strategic plan NGA completed in March 2007. As part of the strategic planning process, the NGA Board of Directors updated our mission and vision statements to reflect an expanded view for NGA's future. The updated mission statement is that *NGA will preserve and develop community-managed green spaces and gardens that enhance Philadelphia's neighborhoods.*

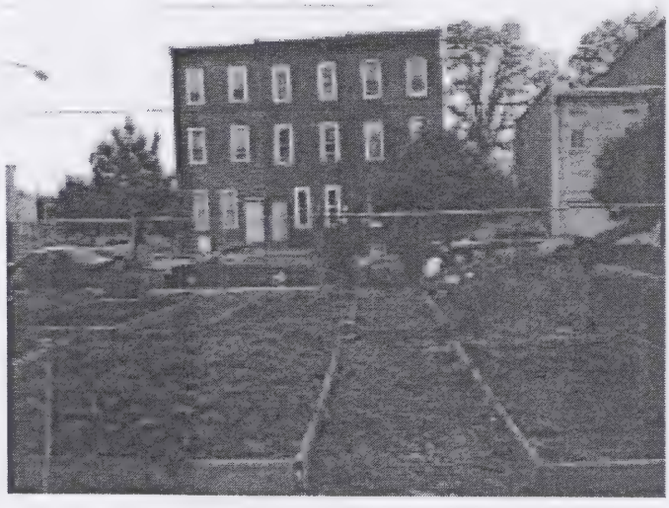
Our revised mission statement reflects the importance of preserving a variety of community-managed green spaces such as gardens, sitting areas, and other green spaces that foster environmentally and socially sustainable urban communities. The mission statement also reflects the value of community-managed green space for all urban neighborhoods. Several of the green spaces NGA has worked to preserve and improve are located in areas where significant neighborhood reinvestment has taken place. These areas, once designated low-income, are now home to people from a blend of income levels—all united in seeing their gardens and green spaces as important neighborhood amenities. Accordingly, our updated vision statement is that *NGA will promote quality community-managed green space as a critical component of healthy, safe, and economically viable urban neighborhoods.*

NGA will continue to provide technical assistance to individuals and organizations regarding the how-tos of preserving gardens and green spaces and steward the twenty-seven gardens currently in the land trust (see page 2 for three new preserved gardens). This support will include advocating for the inclusion of green spaces in neighborhood strategic plans created or funded by the city.

(Continued on Page 4)

Three New Gardens Preserved

The ***Bodine Street Gardeners*** on South 3rd Street above Washington Avenue have reached their goal - to preserve their garden for the future. Councilman DiCicco was very instrumental in preserving this twenty-five years old garden by condemning the land and officially transferring it to NGA on July 11th. The gardeners celebrated their triumph with family and friends on Saturday, September 15th from 4pm until dusk. Local businesses donated food and the gardeners served dishes made from garden produce.

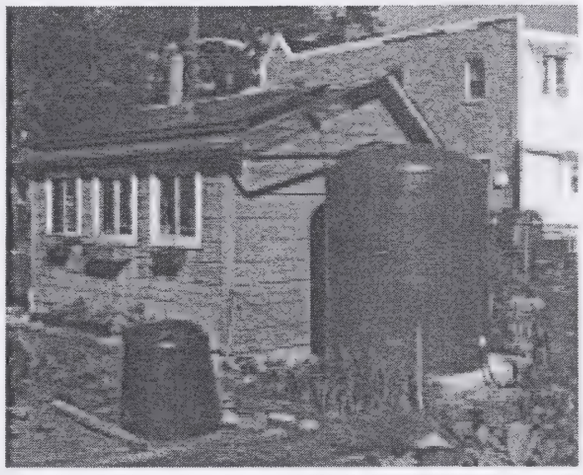


Titles to two other gardens in North Philadelphia were also transferred to NGA from the city recently. On the ***1900 block of North Marshall Street,*** Bob Jacobs and his family and neighbors are growing fresh vegetables for themselves and growing extra for the City Harvest Program as well. Large raised beds make it easier for gardeners of all ages to tend their crops. There is a shady sitting area in the back for visiting with neighbors and a new grassy area along the front.

Not too far away, ***The Friends Garden*** at Front and Somerset Streets is only five years old but looks like it has been a part of the neighborhood for a lot longer. Saro Rodriguez and his family and neighbors have created a little bit of Puerto Rico at this garden with a casita (cottage) surrounded by a front garden and vegetables growing in the back. Some of the vegetable are being donated to local food cupboards through the Philadelphia Green City Harvest program.

Aspen Farms Cistern Project

On its first week of operation, the Aspen Farms Cistern collected 250 gallons of water during one storm. Organic Gardening Magazine donated a 1,000 gallon cistern system to Aspen Farms, an NGA land trust garden in West Philadelphia. Rainwater from the roof of the garden's shed is being collected and stored for use by the garden on drier days. This new cistern will allow Aspen Farms to "harvest" its own rainwater and reduce the amount of water it currently uses from the city's water department. Gardeners and guests celebrated the new cistern at an Open House on August 17th.



A Special Donation

Barbara Hirshowitz was a community gardener at the Warrington Community Garden in West Philadelphia for many years. Barbara was an active member of the garden and served as the group's treasurer. She was very involved in the Community and was much loved by her neighbors. Barbara passed away in March of this year and left a special donation to NGA and her gardening friends. Barbara specified that 30% of her personal IRA be donated to NGA to help us help other gardeners in the future. We are very grateful to Barbara for her generosity of spirit. She will be missed.

Moving on Up to the 5th Floor

The NGA office has been on the third floor of 20th and Arch for over 8 years. We rent space from the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society and benefit from the close proximity and working relationship with PHS, especially the Philadelphia Green program.

PHS staff has increased over the last few years, and PHS is going to remodel the space on the third floor for their Finance and Membership departments. In December, the NGA office will be moving to the fifth floor. So change your address books and put us down as NGA, 100 North 20th Street, **Fifth Floor,** Phila, PA 19103. Our phone numbers will remain the same.

Clip and send with your donation!

Help Save Community Gardens

NGA is a nonprofit urban land trust preserving community-managed gardens and green spaces in Philadelphia's neighborhoods since 1986. We need your support!

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NGA Strategic Plan Moves Forward *(Continued from Page 1)*

To achieve our goal of expanding the number of community-managed green spaces that are preserved in Philadelphia's neighborhoods, NGA will need to partner with others to reach this goal. The City of Philadelphia has been the major donor of land to NGA and will be a key partner in the future. NGA is serving on the Steering Committee for GreenPlan Philadelphia, a comprehensive sustainability plan for the City involving fifteen city departments and numerous community partners. This is the first time such a citywide green plan has been done in Philadelphia. The report with recommendations is due to be completed before the end of this year, just in time for the new mayor to take office in January 2008.

NGA has also worked closely with the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society's Philadelphia Green program since 1986. Almost all of the land trusted gardens were originally started with PHS's help, and many of the gardens are involved this season with the Philadelphia Green City Harvest program. Over the next six months, a committee of representatives from NGA and PHS are looking at options and resources for expanding the land trust work in Philadelphia to support the work being done by both groups with vacant land. We are optimistic that Philadelphia's future will be greener!

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Spring 2008

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New Gardens

Children's Garden

Special Award

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NGA Receives Funding for an Expanded Land Trust Feasibility Study

The William Penn Foundation has just made a grant to NGA to fund a Feasibility Study for expanding the land trust. The need for this study came out of the NGA Strategic Plan completed in March 2007. NGA has worked closely with the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society's Philadelphia Green program since 1986. Over the next year, representatives from NGA and PHS working with a consultant will look at options and resources for expanding the land trust work in Philadelphia to further the work being done by both groups with vacant land.Stay tuned for more news of this study in future newsletters.

We Have Moved to the 5th Floor

In December 2007, the NGA office moved to the fifth floor with other Pennsylvania Horticultural Society staff. We have a close working relationship with PHS, especially the Philadelphia Green program; so the move makes it easier for us to network. Our main phone number will remain the same, but you need to change your address books to:

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Philadelphia, PA 19103

Phone: 215-988-8797

Two More Gardens Preserved

In the Fall 2007 newsletter, we told you about three new gardens being added to the land trust, The Bodine Garden in Queen Village and The Friends Garden & North Marshall Street Garden in North Philadelphia. Since that time, two more gardens have joined the land trust.

The Fitzwater 2000 Garden is located in Southwest Center City, named one of the city's up-and-coming neighborhoods. Near 21st and Fitzwater Street, local residents have been tending two abandoned vacant lots since 1997. The neighbors cleared the trash-filled lots and created an award-winning garden and green oasis in their community. Due to the increase of infill housing development in the area, the gardeners requested NGA's help to preserve their garden. City Council President Anna Verna's staff worked with the gardeners and NGA to condemn the privately-owned properties and transfer the land to NGA and the gardeners in August 2007.

Not too far away is the **Hicks Street Memory Garden,** our newest and youngest land trusted community garden. This small, single lot garden began in January 2007 with a small group of concerned residents and block captains. The lot in question is located on a struggling block that has several vacant and deteriorating houses, and increasing development pressure. Many people see the garden as not only a way to make the neighborhood greener, but also as an opportunity to restore the quality of life for residents and make the entire neighborhood safer.

In addition to planting, the Hicks gardeners have cleaned up the alley and constructed a secure, attractive fence at the rear of the lot. Illegal dumping in the alley has dramatically decreased, as has vandalism and trespassing into neighboring yards and vacant houses.

The garden now has about thirty contributing neighborhood participants including young children, and over sixty residents signed a petition of support for the garden. A donor purchased the lot on the gardeners' behalf in March 2007 from a private owner and donated it to the land trust in December so the garden could be permanently preserved. The gardeners are fundraising to pay back the donor.

Hayward Ford Receives PHS Leadership Award

At the Community Gardeners Brunch on March 9th at the Philadelphia Flower Show, Blaine Bonham, Executive Vice President, presented **Hayward Ford,** an NGA board member, with the 1st Philadelphia Green Leadership Award.

Here is an excerpt from Bonham's presentation: "For more than three decades, Hayward has been a driving force behind Aspen Farms in West Philadelphia, one of the city's most successful and enduring community gardens. Hayward and his garden group have shepherded the garden from a small eight-plot patch into a thriving, comprehensive community garden.

"Aspen Farms was created in 1975 with support from the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society's city gardening program—now Philadelphia Green—at 49th and Aspen Streets, on a plot of abandoned land where houses and a dry-cleaning business once stood. A few years later, Hayward became president of the Aspen Farms Community Garden Club, a post he held until just recently.

"During the late 1980s, Hayward and the other Aspen Farms gardeners developed a close relationship with University of Pennsylvania professor Anne Spirn and her landscape architecture students. The students worked closely with the gardeners to develop the current garden, including the gazebo, three ponds, and butterfly garden. The garden is a frequent prize-winner in the PHS City Gardens Contest.

(Continued on next page)

Pentridge Children's Photo Show

The Pentridge Children's Garden celebrated its 15th anniversary with a photo exhibit by the children of their own lives. The photo exhibit—selected, prepared, and installed by the children—took place at the Satellite Coffee Shop, at 50th Street and Baltimore Avenue during the month of December 2007.

The Pentridge Children's Garden is a volunteer-run community children's garden in West Philadelphia. According to Beth Pulcinella, one of the adult leaders "We have grown hundreds of tomatoes, moved wheel barrow after wheel barrow of dirt, counted worms, eaten green beans, sorrel, sunflower seeds and popcorn that we harvested. Our apple trees climb bigger and taller each year. There have been camping trips to Seven Star Farm, adventures to Cobbs

(Continued on next page)

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Hayward Ford

(Continued from Page 3)

"When he's not in the garden, Hayward volunteers for the organizations he cares about. He has served on PHS Council, the Education Committee, and the Philadelphia Green Advisory Board. He has been president and treasurer of the Neighborhood Gardens Association—which has held Aspen Farms in land trust since 2004 and funded the solar panels and other improvements—and is currently NGA's recording secretary.

"Hayward Ford is a Philadelphia treasure. He is tireless ambassador, not only for Aspen Farms, but also for community green spaces everywhere. He is a true believer in the joy of gardening and in the power of community."

Photo Show

(Continued from Page 3)

Creek, and field trips to the Philadelphia Flower Show. Annual cookouts, pumpkin carvings, and parades are talked about as the years come and go. Eight year old "old timers" give tours to the new kids, violence is not tolerated and amazing conversations about food, nature and the world spill into our well loved soil."

Pentridge Children's Garden also sells vegetables at Clark Park Farmers Market on Saturdays during the season. The kids fill their cart with their vegetables and flowers and walk several blocks to the market. They take turns talking with the customers about the vegetables and carefully record all of their sales.